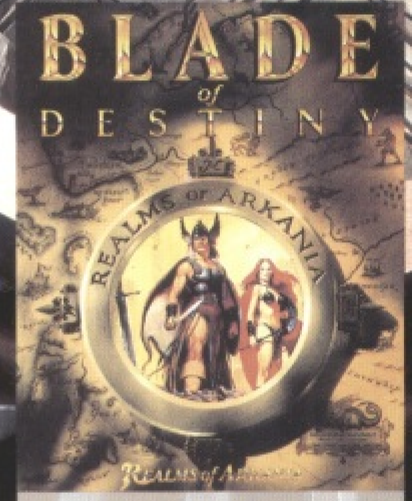

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It's here! But is it better than you-know-what? Find out inside...
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HEAVY





U.S. GOLD Delphine

Legends of Valour
Volume 1 ~ The Dawning

Original
SCRABBLE
THE WORLD'S LEADING WORD GAME

REALMS OF ARKANIA, VOL. 1

Blade of Destiny, from the 'Realms of Arkania' world is based on Germany's most successful role-playing series and has a myriad of features that make this RPG one massive challenge.

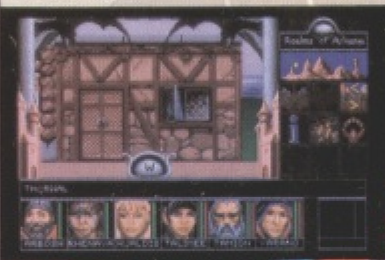
Over 400 hours of gameplay.

Stunning graphics.

- 2 levels of difficulty, which really do cater for both novice and expert RPG gamers alike.
- 12 different races, inhabiting over 50 towns and villages.

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Amiga, Atari ST and PC & Compatibles (VGA - 640k min memory. Hard Drive, High Density. Supports AdLib™ and SoundBlaster).



EXPERIENCE A MILESTONE IN ARCADE ADVENTURE

Fast moving action and adventure feature in this unique combination of graphics, animation and music. Produced by Delphine Software, one of Europe's most respected development houses.

Flashback breaks new ground in computer games excitement and intrigue.

Astonishingly lifelike character animation is achieved by the innovative application of Rotoscoping-a technique first developed by the film industry to animate cartoons. Actors are filmed performing all of the movements to be featured in the game and stills from these sequences are used to recreate the movements on screen.

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ROLE-PLAYING FANTASY AT ITS MOST REAL...

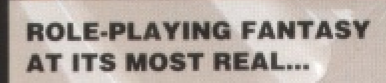
Legends of Valour - The Dawning, gives you the freedom to make your own choices, move around, and create your own lifestyle and career path in the rich and detailed town of Mitteldorf. Travel at will above the ground or in the miles of underground caves, tunnels and sewers. It's your life to make of it what you will!

- Smooth scrolling, texture mapped 3-D viewpoint.
- Autocombat facility.
- Novice mode for beginners.
- From the creator of the award-winning 'Corporation'.

"Probably one of the most talked about games by Magazine reviewers this year."

Available on:

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THE WORLD'S LEADING WORD GAME.

Whether you're a wizard with words or you spell Xylophone with a Z, you'll love this magical piece of programming from U.S. Gold. Scrabble for your screen.

Challenge up to 3 friends or take on the might of the computer solo.

12 skill levels to test seasoned pro's or first timers alike.

Contains every single page of the Chambers Official Scrabble Dictionary - over 134,000 words!

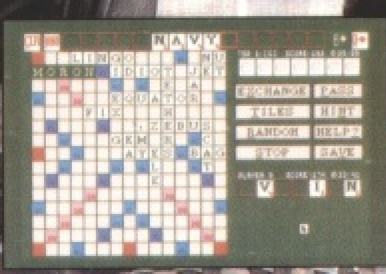
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Computer Scrabble - for those who enjoy a night on the tiles.

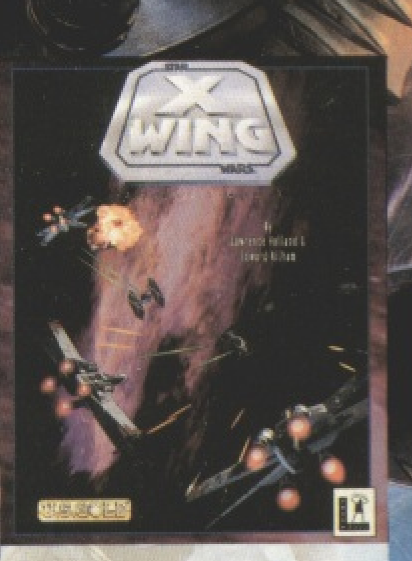
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METAL

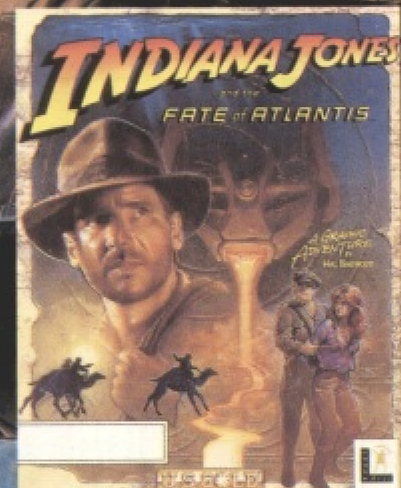


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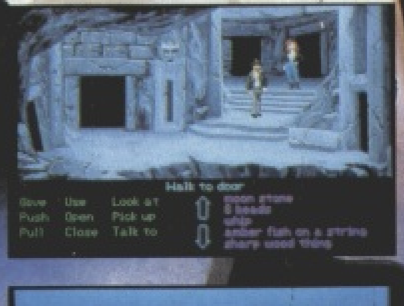
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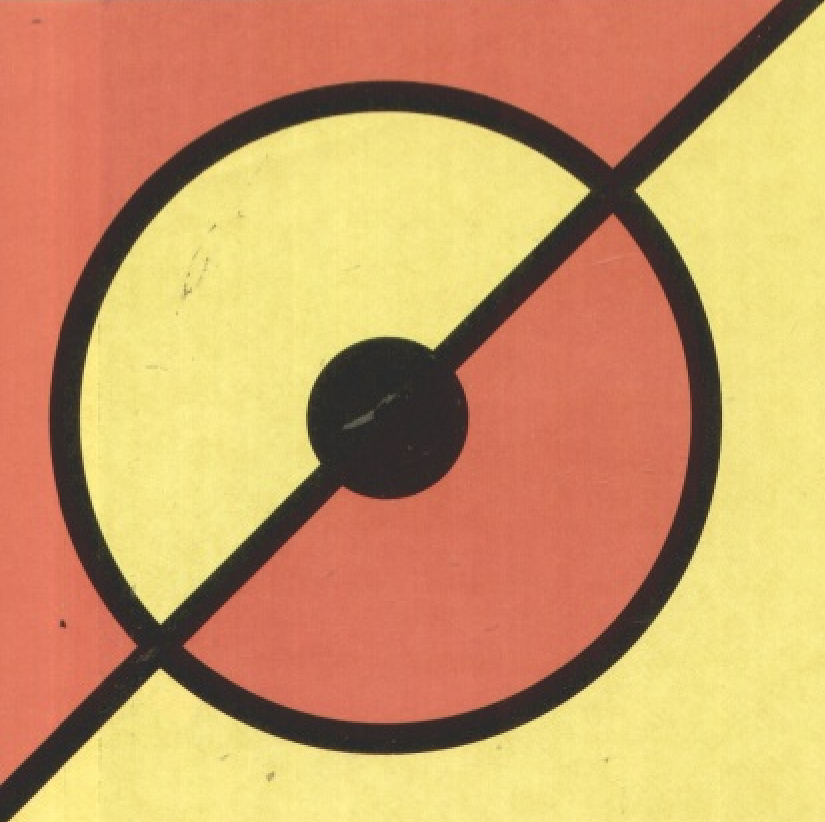
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Now look, we're getting a little fed up with people sending in faulty coverdisks directly to us. Please, please, please send them to; The One Coverdisk Returns, PC Wise, Dowlais Top Business Park, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan CF48 2YY. We regret that any coverdisk problems sent to us will remain unanswered.

This month's saying: I would if I could, believe me.

ents

GAMES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

BOOT SECTOR

LOADING YOUR DISKS

(1) Select the disk you want and stick it in your disk drive.
(2) Turn on your Amiga.
(3) A menu will appear from which selection is made by pressing the appropriate function key .
(4) Explode with delight as you play your chosen demo.

NIPPON SAFES INC. DMI

You'll not find many graphic adventures on a magazine coverdisk but we've pulled out all the stops to get hold of this Nippon Safes Inc. demo so that you can sample the delights of this original game for yourselves.

If you read the review last month you'll recall that the game centres around three drop-outs who have been recently released from prison and their exploits in the town of Tioko (it's meant to be spelt like that, by the way). If you're wondering just how this trio of trouble-makers came to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure then this demo is most definitely for you, Mr Shoe. It's the game's playable intro, y'see, in which all of them get to commit their various 'crimes'.



The demo is played over three parts, the idea being to get each of the game's principal characters arrested (remember, kids, don't try this at home). If you click anywhere on the screen with the left mouse button your character will move to that position. Anything of interest will be highlighted when you pass the cursor over them so you'll be able to identify at a glance what objects can be manipulated.

If you hold down the right mouse button, a menu will appear from which it is possible to select various functions, as shown below. One last thing before we move on. If you want to use an object, select it from the inventory and then click with the left mouse button when the cursor is over what you want to use it with. Also, if you want to operate something pick it up then move the pointer over your character and click the left mouse button.

Right, that's that then, let's take a look a disk B...

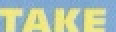
OPEN/CLOSE

If you want to open (or close, in fact) anything then select this icon and then position the cursor over whatever it is you want to open (or close, in fact).



EXAMINE

You can't beat a good look at something and this is the thing to do it with. Choose this icon, click on an interesting object and your character will tell you all about it.



TAKE

This icon can be used for anything you like as long as it's taking something. You should know the procedure by now but I'll repeat it for the hard of looking. Pick this icon, click over what you want to nick and it will be added to your inventory.

SPEAK

Some people are really, really interesting and chatting to them sometimes provides vital clues. And as an extra added bonus puzzle, you're going to have to work out how to do this yourself.



You have to admit that this month's disks are pretty special. Not only have we managed to get hold of the demo they said could never be, er, demoed (i.e. Nippon Safes Inc) but you'll also find the greatest complete shoot-'em-up ever to be given away on the front of any magazine. Including Shoot-'em-ups Monthly. And, and, and there are two more COMPLETE GAMES for you to get your teeth into!!! But best of all, it's Simon Byron's last Boot Sector. Which means as from next month someone good will be writing it.



DISK A
NIPPON SAFES INC.
DMI



DISK B
BLASTER ALIEN BASH
TRACTOR BEAM

BLASTER

EXCLUSIVE complete game!

You can read all about this amazing game in the In The Biz feature which starts on page 28. I wrote it and it's great. Anyway, to play the game, insert disk B and press the appropriate function key. When the program has loaded, press FIRE to begin the game proper.

You'll now be presented with the Planet Select Screen. You can choose any of the six planets by moving the joystick up or down. Moving the joystick left selects 'Easy' mode (where the aliens don't return your fire) while moving the joystick right selects 'Hard' mode (where the aliens fire back at you). Once the planets have been successfully completed, they will glow oddly on this screen. Planets can only be completed on hard mode.







Once all the selecting has been done, it's off to the main part of the game - the frantic blast-'em-up! Holding down FIRE releases a wave of bullets and moving the joystick in any direction will make your ship move around the screen. There are a number of power-ups which perform a range of handy functions, as outlined in the box elsewhere.

The ship has a shield which can sustain one hit when fully recharged, as shown by the shield indicator at the bottom right of the screen. Each time the shield is destroyed it takes longer to recharge and if the ship is hit during the recharge period it will explode, resulting in the loss of a life.

During each level there are occasional meteor storms where asteroids, meteors and huge comets whizz at you. The small asteroids and larger meteors can be destroyed but the comets will kill you even if your shield is up.

At the end of each planet level a mega guardian will appear. Once he has been vanquished, you'll enter a bonus space stage where things soon become very fast and frantic. You can't lose a life on this stage but if the ship is hit then the level ends.





The game can be paused at any time by pressing either of the mouse buttons. This brings up a menu, entries are highlighted by moving up and down, and selected with FIRE.

RESTART - Resumes play.

TETNUS - Calls up Tetnus, a subgame.

QUIT - Return to the introduction screens.

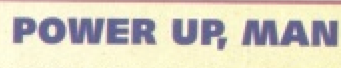
Extra lives are awarded every 200,000 points, beginning at 100,000.

The game is over when all 6 planets have been completed on hard mode, or if you run out of lives.

We're interested in what you think about Blaster and the feature that goes with it. Write in and let us know. Remember, your scrawlings could be the Star Letter in a month or so's time and fifty pounds worth of software will be delivered right to your front door, all courtesy of The One.







POWER UP, MAN

P	Increases the power of your shots and the amount they spread out.
S	Speeds up the ship.
F	Shots turn red and don't stop when they hit an alien.
K	Smart bomb. Wipes the screen of all aliens.
I	Invincibility for a while.
T	Twin ship. A clone ship appears (which can't be destroyed) and helps with the shooting while mirroring your every move.
M	Mends the ship's shield and recharge unit (see below).
L	An extra life.
CRYSTAL	A crystal (surprisingly). These are left behind by the 300th alien killed without dying. Collecting it before it disappears off screen gives you Warp 5 and the whole game speeds up threefold while you become invincible for a bit.

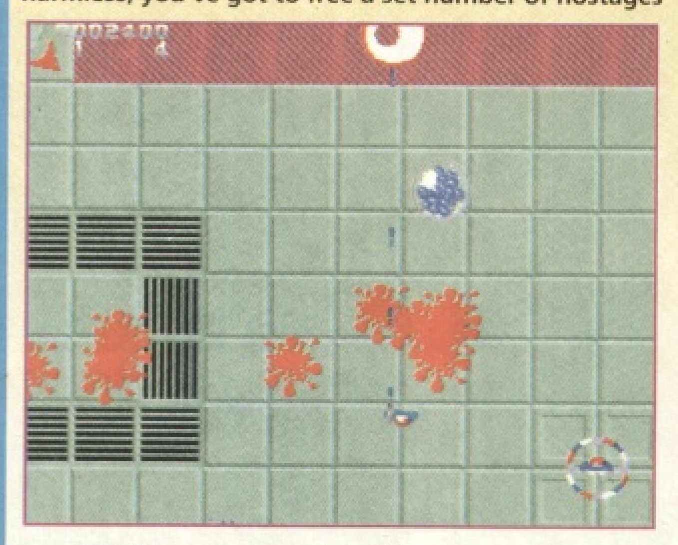
ALIEN BASH

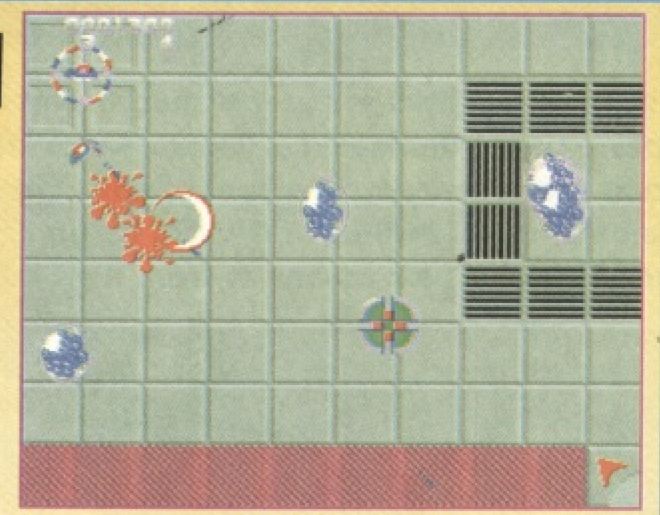
Complete game!

To be honest with you, Alien Bash is the sort of game that you can pick up and play without reading any instructions, it's that simple. Anyway, for those of you who are initiative-challenged will be pleased to know that the full instructions are coming up after this break.

Break.

Right, you play a nippy nameless young fellow who has to fend off hoards of alien scum-bag weakling no-brained slime-buckets using only your initiative. Oh, and a gun. By running around the spaceship (using the joystick) and avoiding anything which looks remotely harmless, you've got to free a set number of hostages





from every level. These prisoners are encapsulated inside a lethal force-field which needs to be blasted away before you can run in and collect the stranded bods. Once you've managed to free all the prisoners in the level, make your way back to where you started from and you'll be whisked away to the next challenge.

Before you rush off and begin to blast things willy-nilly, it's worth mentioning that you cannot fire unless the joystick is pointing in one of the eight directions, so you either have to run towards the alien scum-bag weakling no-brained slime-buckets whilst firing or centre the joystick, push FIRE and then move the joystick in whichever direction you wish to shoot.

There are simply loads of power-ups (revealed by destroying the funny looking shapes) to collect along the way, which vary from triple shot to super-hard death-inducing missiles which wipeout aliens with one hit. Brilliant! Also, there's a nifty invincibility token which renders you... yeah, you should know the routine by now.

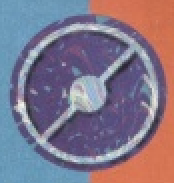
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TRACTOR BEAM

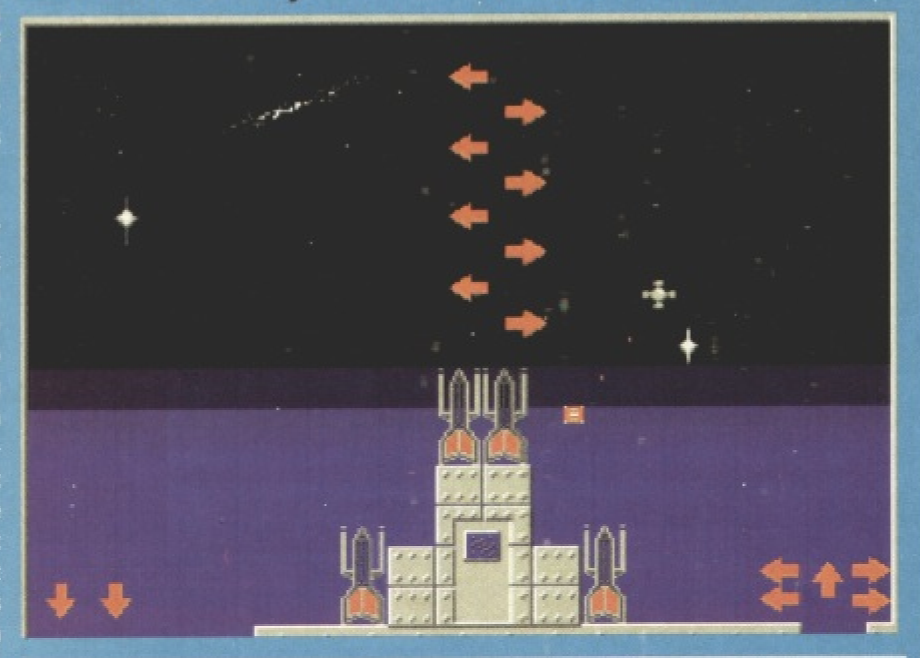
Complete game!

The last game on disk B is a simulation of a light strapped to the front of a farming vehicle. Except it's not. What you'll find here is a Thrust-inspired AMOS game which, for once, is well-written and fun with it.

The idea is to pick up a square thing (okay, so I don't know what it is exactly - is that a crime? We'll call it Baz for the time being) from the right-hand side of the screen and deposit in safely back at your start position. Of course, it's not that simple, oh no sirree Bob. First of all you've got the different obstacles to avoid. They can be anything from a stationary block, the walls or Baz if it manages to crash into you so you'll have to watch where you're heading otherwise it could be blinds for you. Or curtains.

Just like in Asteroids or Thrust, once you head off in a particular direction you'll continue moving that way until you either collide with a solid object or move the joystick in the opposite direction. It's all to do with there being no friction in space or something like that but Dave would be the man to find out more about that from because he's got a degree in Astrophysics or something. I'll tell you what, I'll ask him for you. "Because there's no friction or atmosphere. Well, there is but it's negligible. Anyway, I'm busy Simon, when's Boot Sector going to be finished." Right, thanks. I'd better get on with it.

Once you're within a few pixels of Baz, pushing the fire button will release a rope-thingy which should (hopefully) attach itself to the square object. From then it's just a case of making it back to the other side of the screen (taking into account the extra weight of Baz), dumping the aforementioned item back into the water and landing next to it yourself. Do all that successfully and you're on to the next screen.



The Small Print

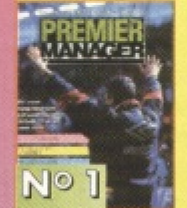
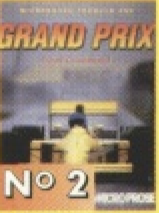
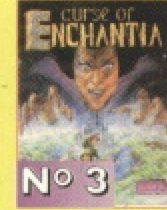
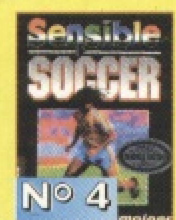
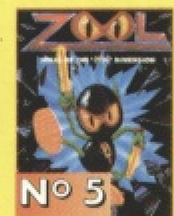
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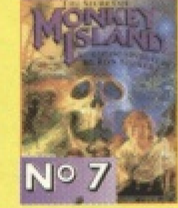
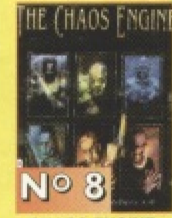
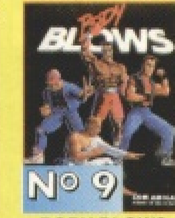
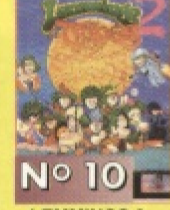
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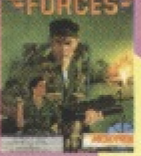
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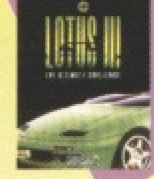
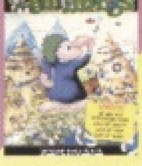






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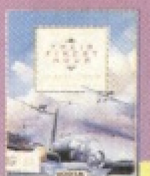



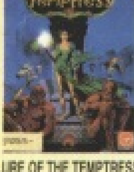
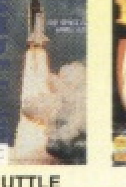
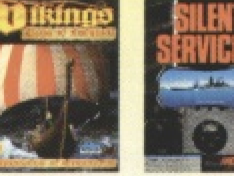
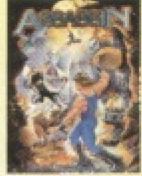







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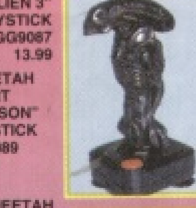
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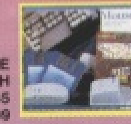
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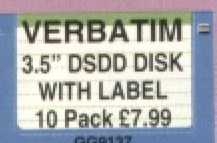
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NEWS

RESULTS JUST IN...

Team 17 and Sensible Software carried the Amiga flag at this year's Golden Joystick Awards, walking away with the Software House of the Year and Computer Game of the Year awards respectively.

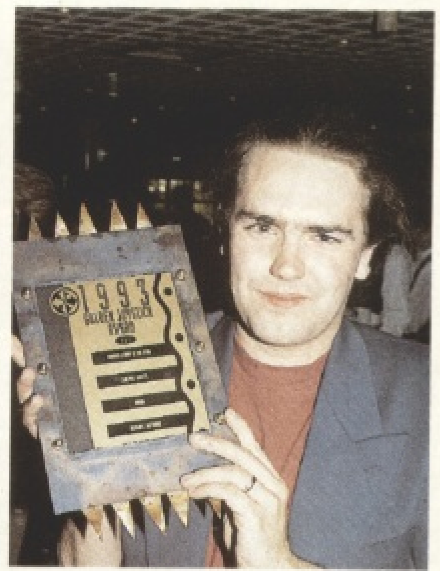
The awards, which are voted for by readers of all EMAP Images' magazines (of which The One is, of course, one), were presented by Jonathan Ross at a ceremony in London's swanky Kensington Roof Gardens.

Although the majority of the gongs were console-related, Team 17 caused something of a sensation by jointly collecting the prestigious software house prize with American giant Electronic Arts - which is no mean feat, considering that the Team's efforts are dedicated to the Amiga only, while EA operates across all formats.

Sensible Software collected their award for Sensible Soccer, with the firm's Jon Hare choosing to mark the occasion with a stirring speech warning against the dangers of complacency (he also used a few words not usually heard at occasions of this type, but that's showbiz!).

Other Amiga-related winners included Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis (Best Licensed Computer Game), LucasArts (Programming Team of the Year) and Formula One Grand Prix (Best Computer Simulation).





TEAM TALK



Flushed with success from its appearance at the Golden Joysticks Wakefield's finest, Team 17, has announced a couple of new releases and the addition of a number of new development crews to its ever-growing roster.

As regular readers will already know, The Team's next full-price release will be Overdrive, an overhead perspective racing game featuring four different types of vehicle - 4x4s, Formula 1, sports cars and buggies - battling it out over five separate track types. The game is currently single-player only and looks likely to remain that way, however the option for two players to race head to head by use of a serial link will be included in the finished version.

More racing action is promised on the budget front, where the Team's next offering will be the self-explanatory F1 Challenge. All of the genuine tracks are promised, along with numerous other features including bad weather and the like. "I know you've heard it all before, but this one is full price quality at a budget price," says Team 17's Martyn Brown. "We reckon that it's got to be one of the best available."

On the personnel front, Team 17 has signed up programmer Jose Doran and artist Richard Heasman, who are currently beavering away to meet the early 1994 deadline on a title known provisionally as Little Sod. Lots of humour is promised, as the game will present its player with 99 ways to splat an inoffensive little blue blob.

Other possible development collaborations include a link with a Swedish developer, whose identity Brown is keeping quiet at the moment. "We can't really name names," he says, "but suffice to say that the words ball and pin come into play. We get on well with the lads - anyone who can stock up their fridges with beer like those guys can is always going to get on famously with Team 17."

ALL CHANGE!





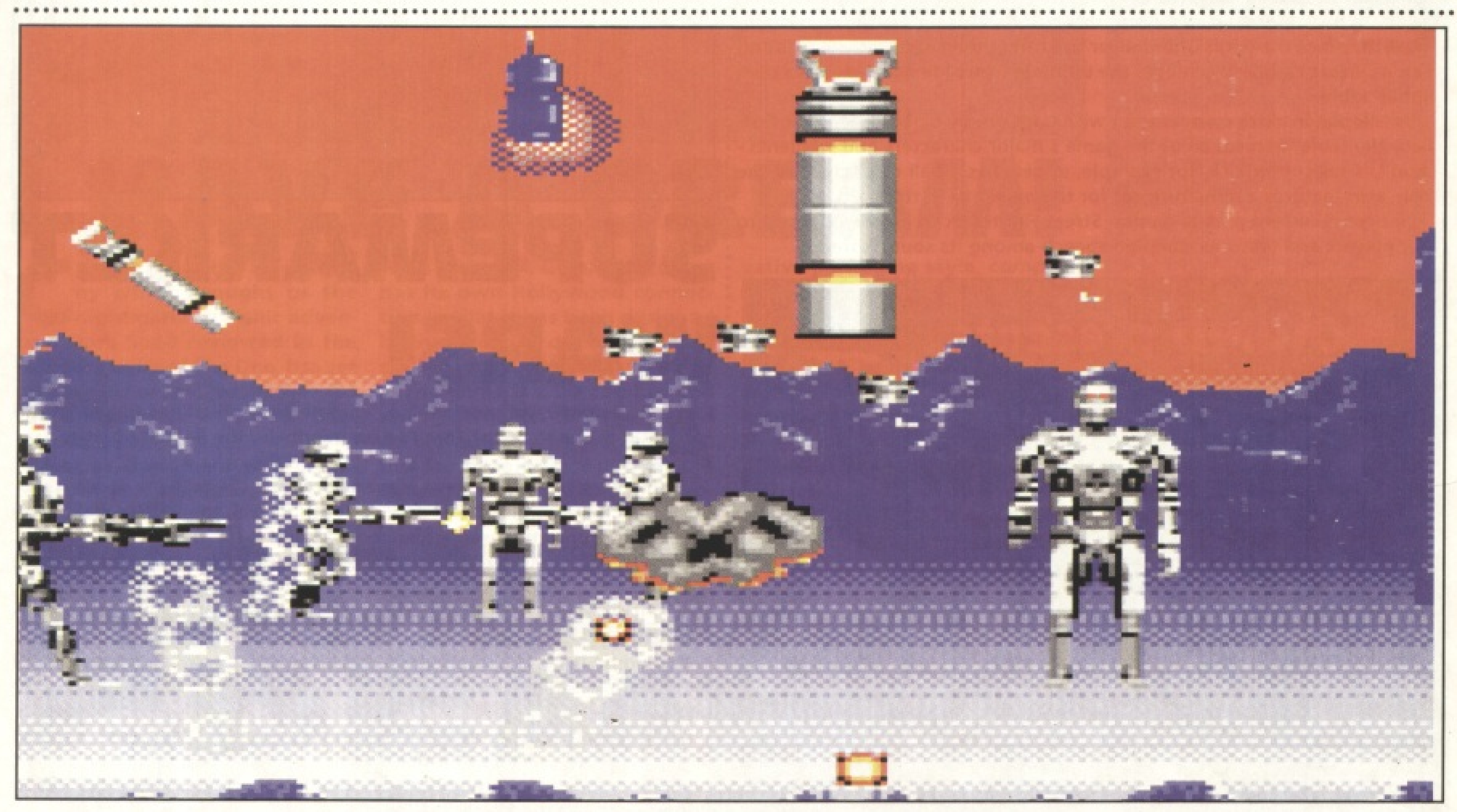
It's out with the old and in with the new here at The One. Well, not quite because nobody's leaving or anything (unfortunately David Upchurch still resolutely refuses to budge from the Editor's chair - we think he must be glued to it or something) but there's certainly lots of 'new' going on.

First up we're all pleased to announce that children's favourite and Victor Meldrew impressionist Simon Byron has been promoted to the position of Deputy Editor. (You see, sometimes truth IS stranger than fiction.) He was reportedly "delighted", for once in his miserable life.

And welcome aboard two new faces! At last we've got a Staff Writer, so now we might get to go home occasionally. His names's Matthew Broughton, a good-looking 22 wearing a tight-cut dark blue suit complemented by brown shoes. When not playing games Matthew enjoys performing lead oboe in his amateur 'progressive' rock band.

And last but not least we come to the lovely Jenny Abrook, our new art editor. Jenny was snatched in a tit-for-tat raid from CVG, current home of Gary 'Bitch' Whitta. Already the lovely Jenny has implemented sweeping design changes throughout the magazine, such as making sure the cover looks quite good after last month's green-and-purple monstrosity. In her spare time Jenny has passed the minutes just being generally lovely.

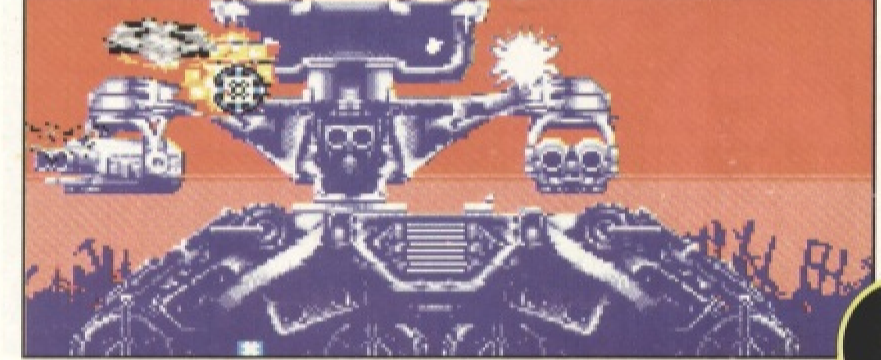




VIRGIN GET ACCLAIM

Virgin Games has added Bart Simpson and Arnold Schwarzenegger to its already impressive roster of stars, by signing a deal with Acclaim Entertainment to publish some of the American Nintendo specialist's biggest names for the Amiga.

Although both companies are still keeping exact details of the agreement under their hats, a Virgin spokesman did confirm that it would cover at least six titles: Terminator 2: The Coin-Op, Alien3, The Crash Dummies, The Simpsons: Bart Vs the World, Krusty's Fun House and, perhaps most importantly of all, the eagerly-awaited arcade beat-'em-up Mortal Kombat. Programming work has already begun on all six games, and Virgin hopes to have them ready in time for the Christmas market.





TV-SCAPE

Following the previous link-up between Mindscape and TV production company Broadsword on the Knightmare television series, the two companies have now decided to join forces once again to produce a series of 'interactive broadcast' games.

Neither company was willing to reveal full details of the project, but it's believed that the games will be an advance on the current TV phone games (as featured on Saturday morning kids' TV), where contestants send instructions via telephone to affect what happens on screen.

Broadsword's managing director, Tim Child, believes that this new venture can dramatically increase the quality of these games. "Many programmes have introduced interactive phone gaming," he says, "but with a few exceptions the games themselves have been rather disappointing, both in technical quality and play value."

Should the new games take off, Mindscape has indicated that it would eventually publish standalone Amiga versions.

TABLE-TASTIC!

Chun Li, Blanka, Roy, Honda and the rest of the street-fightin' gang are back in the arcades from this month. This time around, though, they face the perils of the silver ball rather than each other's fists and feet, as Street Fighter II achieves the ultimate in arcade accolades - its own pinball table.

Developed in close co-operation with CapCom by pinball specialist Gottlieb, the table features all of the game's major characters and elements - Chun Li's helicopter kick, for example, appears as a ball obstacle, and the table also features a miniature car for the player to flatten.

Like most current pinball games, Street Fighter II can be played by up to four players and features sampled speech among its sound effects.





SUPEMARKET WARS!

After months of media hype, 'commerce conflict' has finally hit the UK in the shape of Tomy's new handheld, the Barcode Battler.

Just in case any of you have managed to miss the millions of news stories which have heralded this new gadget's arrival, the Battler makes use of standard consumer product barcodes to add extra 'power' to its games.

Players have to cut out the codes and attach them to special cards before 'swiping' them through the machine's reader. The codes work at random, so you'll never know if your Corn Flakes barcode is going to be more valuable than your Frosties until you actually try them both out.

The game itself is a numbers-based affair (that's right - no graphics!) played either by one player against the machine or by two players head to head.

The Battler has been on sale in Japan for well over a year now, and has already clocked up sales of more than 1.5 million. Tomy expects a similar reaction over here, but popularity in Japan is no guarantee of success in Britain - just ask the Nolan Sisters.

The Barcode Battler is available now, priced at around £40.

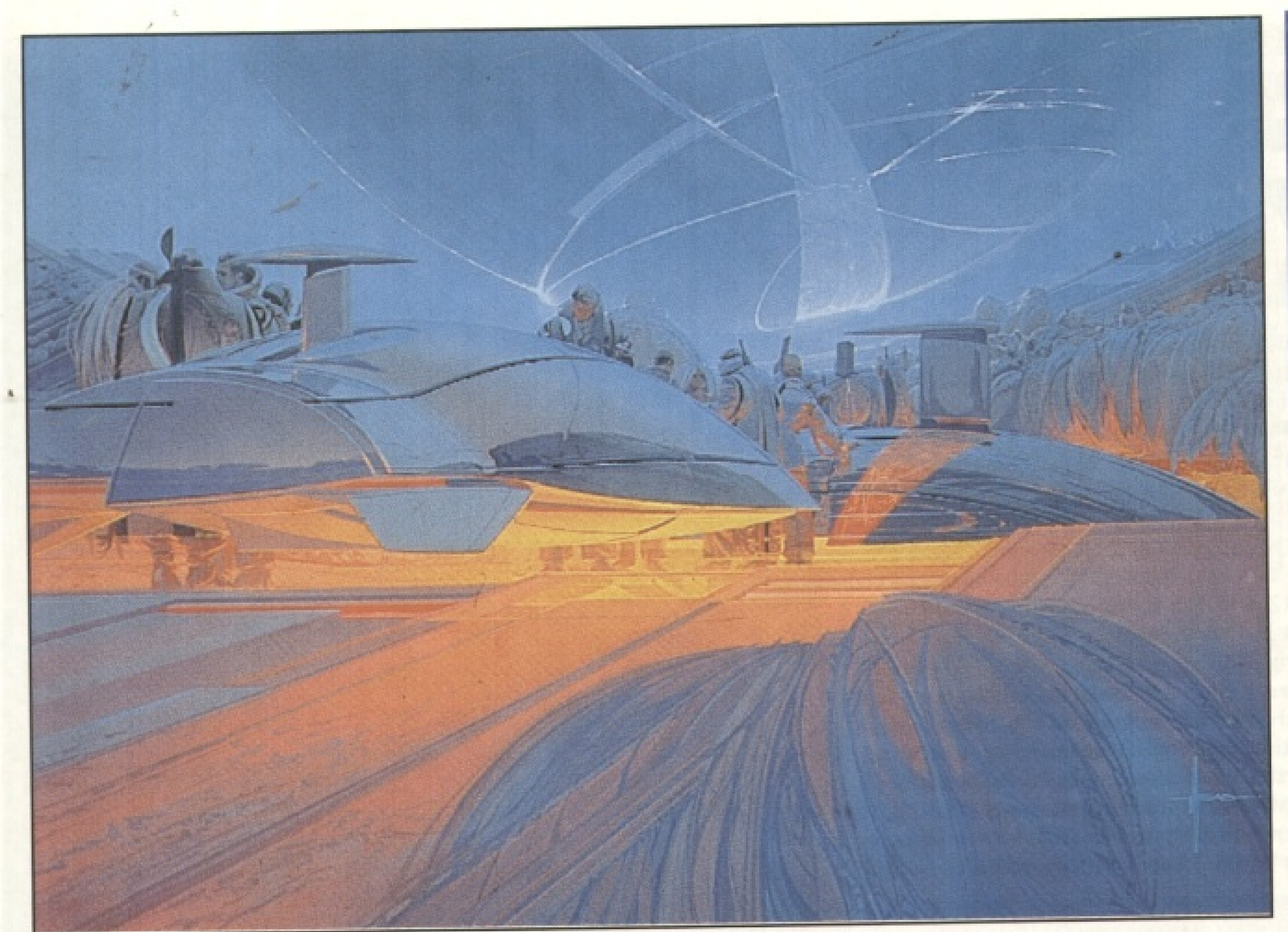
IT'S BAD AND IT'S BACK!

ITV's first ever computer and video games show Bad Influence proved to be such a hit first time around that it's to return later this year for a second series.

The show, made by Yorkshire Television and starring Andy Crane, will pick up where it left off in the second week of September and will run for 26 weeks.

Recently released figures show that Bad Influence's audience averaged roughly four and a half million viewers a week.





I HAVE A DREAM!

Cyberdreams, the US company which brought us the nightmarish graphic adventure Dark Seed reviewed in the February issue of The One, has set up shop in Europe, just in time for the announcement of its next release, CyberRace.

Just as Dark Seed was developed in collaboration with the Alien artist H.R. Giger, CyberRace has its own Hollywood connection in that it has been designed by Syd Mead, a designer whose credits include Blade Runner.

The game is a 3D combat and racing game, featuring digitised actors and ray-traced vehicles. Due for release later in the year, CyberRace will feature an innovative packaging style, complete with metal model of the spacecraft you race in!

Of special interest to long-term readers of The One (or maybe not) is the news that Cyberdreams' new European operation is to be headed up by none other than our former advertising manager Mark Scriven.

MADNESS AT GREMLIN

Gremlin has racked up some serious credibility points by joining forces with the recently-reformed Madness to produce Madness: House of Fun. The game, which should hit the software shops in time for Christmas, will feature a new character, Nutz, and many of the band's greatest hits.



Gremlin spokesman David Martin is full of praise for the world-famous Nutty Boys band (how could you forget Baggy Trousers?), saying: "Sometimes you get endorsements where the people concerned just leave things to you, but Madness are really involved with and interested in this game."

In addition to teaming up with the nutty boys, Gremlin also has new of one of its own home-grown stars, as Zool II has been pencilled in for a late October release. Details are scarce as yet, but news which has emerged from the firm's Sheffield base suggests that the Ninja from the Nth Dimension may find himself helped along by a glamorous female accomplice this time around believed to be called Zoosie.

The arrival of Zool II seems somehow inevitable, as recently-released figures reveal that the original Amiga version of the game sold well over 80,000 copies.

STRIPTEASERS

...It's been all change at Commodore this month, as Kelly Sumner has quit as managing director after less than 12 months in the job. Sumner, who has left to head up the European arm of the major American software company GameTek (the original company behind Humans) will be replaced by two joint managers, David Pleasance and Colin Proudfoot. None of these changes should have any affect on the launch of Commodore's top secret CD games machine, which is still expected to hit the shops in time for Christmas...

...The European Leisure Software Publishers Association (ELSPA) is to beef up its battle against software piracy with the help of MP Emma Nicholson. "If British companies are going to continue to lead the world in interactive entertainment product, then the government has to play its part by protecting them with laws which can be understood by the police and upheld by the courts," says ELSPA's spokesman Roger Bennett...

...Millennium's aquatic secret agent James Pond is scale-ing new heights of popularity, as the publisher has sole-d him off to appear in his own comic strip in kiddie's TV magazine Look In! and on a range of T-shirts. "We expect to trawl huge net profits," says a Millennium spokesman...

...Good news and bad news for flight sim buffs this month. The good news is that a new fanzine has been launched entirely dedicated to the subject. The bad news is that The Computer Flight Sim Journal (as the new publication is called) is entirely produced in Australia. The Journal features reviews, tips and articles on flight sim-related topics such as great aces and historic aircraft, so if this seems to be enough to make a telephone call to Australia worthwhile, you can contact the editors (03) 578 0010 for details of how to subscribe...

...Psygnosis is currently beating its chest and vigorously blowing its own super-large trumpet at the recent announcement that it has become the first ever software company to win a coveted Queen's Award for Export .The award comes mainly for its push into Japan, which has recently seen the first release of its forthcoming Amiga CD blaster Microcosm (the Japanese release was for Fujitsu's FM Towns machine)...

...Domark has launched a new label for all of its forthcoming sports sims. Going by the name of Champions of Sport, the label will kick off with International Rugby Challenge, an updated version of Championship Manager, Pro Golf and Formula One Champions...

NICE BIT O' KIT!

Model kit specialist Revell has come up with what must rank as one of the most unusual uses for any home computer ever - a series of model kit building programs.

Scheduled for release on CDTV only, the programs will allow the user to 'build' a model car, boat, aeroplane or whatever from component parts, and then to make use of the completed craft within a suitable game.

The first title to appear in the new range will be Motor Stars, a collection of exotic cars including the Bugatti EB110, the Porsche 911 'slant nose', the BMW Nazca M12 and the Lamborghini LP500S.

Once the player has constructed these dream machines, he or she can then take them out for a road test, as the CD also contains a complete race game. Future titles, which will be available in time for Christmas, will include High Tech Aircraft and American Street Cars.

"These releases add an exciting high-tech dimension to model building and will revolutionise the way consumers build models in the future," says Revell's international marketing manager Paul Ballantyne. "It extends the fantasy of building and racing the car of your dreams in a super-charged game which keeps its players on the edge of their seats."

D.I.D. DONE DID IT!

Digital Image Design (D.I.D.) has nailed its colours firmly to the Ocean mast by signing a an exclusive development deal with Ocean Software which will tie it to the Manchester-based publisher for its next six games.

The seven-figure deal is believed to be the biggest of its kind signed between a publisher and developer. It cements an ongoing relationship between D.I.D. and Ocean, who have previously collaborated on F-29, RoboCop 3 and Epic.

D.I.D.'s managing director Martin Kenwright is understandably pleased with the new agreement: "This is obviously the deal of a lifetime for us," he says. "And it's equally good news for other independent development teams, as other publishers are bound to lead where Ocean follows."

Ocean's Gary Bracey is equally enthusiastic, saying: "Digital Image Design is without question the leading light in 3D games development," he says. "With this agreement coming hot on the heels of a major investment in Ocean's own in-house development technology, we are now well placed to make serious inroads into the future of CD gaming."

The first game scheduled to appear under the new arrangement will be Dominion (once known as Odyssey or Epic 2 to its mates), currently having a soundtrack applied by the venerable goth icons Alien Sex Fiend





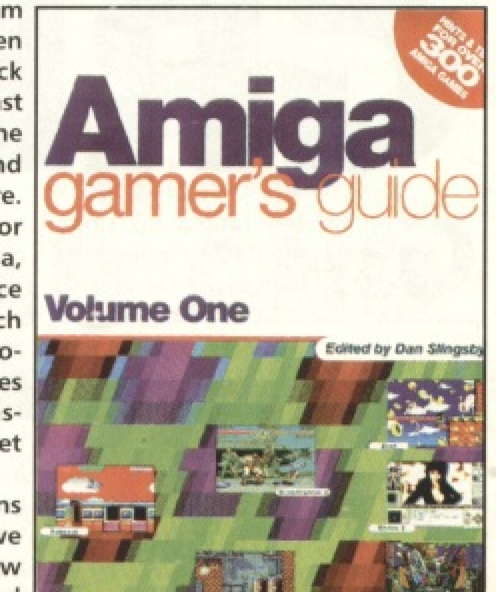
WE ARE GOLDEN...

This is not a budget game' - or so it says on the mysterious flyer which we've just received from Finland. What it is is Stardust, a shoot-'em-up from newcomer Bloodhouse which allegedly makes use of all sorts of technical wizardry including ray-tracing and six-channel stereo sound - and all for the 'not budget' price of £16.99.

YOU'RE BOOKED!

Stuck in Street Fighter 2? Rattled by Robocod? Bamboozled by the Blues Brothers? Driven zany by Zool? (Okay, we get the message - Ed.) Well worry no more, because help is at hand in the shape of the Amiga Gamer's Guide, a 368-page compendium of hints, tips and cheats for more than 300 of the most popular Amiga games of all time.

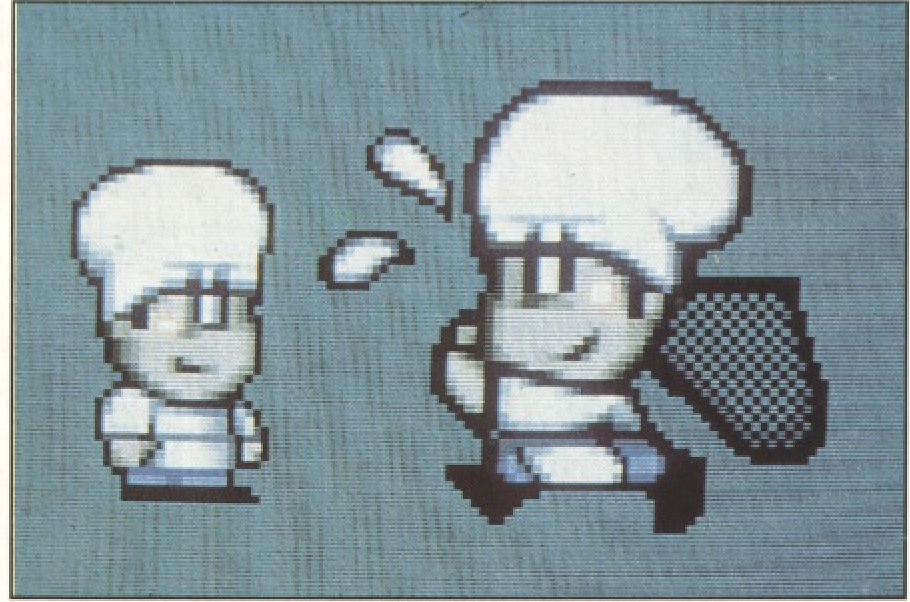
Packed between the Guide's paperback covers are extended player guides on 26 major releases - from Another World to Zak McKracken (taking in such notables as Kick Off 2 and the Shadow of the Beast trilogy along the way) - while the appendix contains cheats and level codes on many, many more.



Edited by Dan Slingsby, editor of our sister magazine CU Amiga, the Guide is published by Bruce Smith Books (a company which until now has specialised in producing manuals for Amiga techies on such riveting subjects as mastering the C compiler) and will set you back £14.95.

By the way, the cover contains the words 'Volume One' so we reckon that there might be a few more in the pipeline. Interested parties can contact Bruce Smith Books on (0923) 894355.





LUNCH BREAK!

It seems as though someone at Mindscape's development team is one sandwich short of a picnic, as they're to follow the release of Alfred Chicken with another edible offering... Pierre le Chef: Out to Lunch.

Forty-eight levels of gastronomic platform hopping are promised, as the culinary continental searches six countries for his missing ingredients which have been taken from him by his arch rival, Le Chef Noir.

Each country is themed by featuring its own national dishes and a suitably ethnic soundtrack, while all of your old platform favourites - power ups, secret rooms and so on - will all be in there somewhere. Food fans should prepare themselves, as the feast begins in September.

On a slightly more serious note, Mindscape is also set to release the latest 'software toy' from Maxis, SimLife. Converted from a Macintosh and PC original, SimLife allows the player to create all manner of abstract life forms, both plant and animal, and watch how they grow and develop.

"The game is based on real scientific information on genetics, so that the ecosystems which players create could actually exist," says SimLife's designer, Ken Karakotsios. "But Sim Life is also open-ended enough so that people can create experimental worlds that only live in their imaginations."

GOING FOR GOLD!

Booming Brummie publisher US Gold will attempt to freeze out the opposition this Christmas with a 10-event game based on the forthcoming Winter Olympics.

The winter games, which are now held every two years instead of four, are due to take place in Lillehammer in Norway next February.

US Gold's game of the games will feature all of the winter favourites, including downhill skiing, the giant slalom and so on, and will accommodate up to four players.

CHARTS

THE AMIGA TOP TEN

1. Desert Strike (EA)
2. Reach for the Skies (Virgin Games)
3. Body Blows (Team 17)
4. Premier Manager (Gremlin)
5. B-17 Flying Fortress (MicroProse)
6. The Chaos Engine (Renegade)
7. Sensible Soccer V1.1 (Renegade)
8. Superfrog (Team 17)
9. Lemmings 2 (Psygnosis)
10. Historyline 1914-18 (Blue Byte)

This chart is kindly provided by Virgin Games Centre. If you're after software give 'em a try - they should have a store near you.



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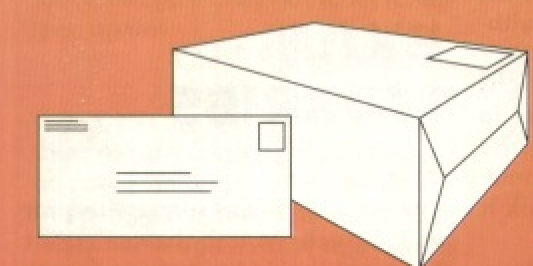
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Letters

You lot are bonkers! We couldn't believe some of the stuff you wrote in to tell us this month. Good work, keep it up! And, of course, any particularly exceptional or merely brilliant letters get Star Letter status and £50 worth of software, which can't be bad. Why delay? Write today! Send your scribblings to: Letters, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU Or, if you're particularly flash, why not FAX us on: 071 972 6710?

SOUNDS GREAT!

Dear The One,
Recently, I have been wondering what really provides the atmosphere for a game. Then it came upon me - it actually happens to be the soundtrack/music. You may (or may not) laugh a bit at first, but think about it carefully... What would Lemmings be without its little ditties? Everyone likes Lemmings, for sure, even though the graphics aren't amazing. The main reason is that the Lemmings have a great deal of character to them and do you know what boosts their character? The music.

Unfortunately, none of the recent soundtracks appear to have any real tune to them. I can remember Monty On The Run on the Commodore 64 and I'm sure that anyone who has played this classic game will agree with me that it has to have one of the best soundtracks ever. During Rob Hubbard's C64 period, he composed some classic tunes but I've heard recently that he's wasting his time on the Megadrive's tinny sound-chip, which is a great shame.

As you may or may not know, I am a real Lemmings fan and was looking forward to purchasing the sequel. However, after seeing (or should that be hearing?) it at my friends, I had little incentive to buy it (it's now on my shopping list as 'not essential'). And you can guess why, can't you? The soundtracks are just crap remixes of well-known bagpipe or Egyptian tunes, and although suitable, they lack the atmosphere of some of the original's classic ditties.

It occurs to me that even when we have CD quality sound with millions of sound channels or whatever, we'll still be listening to out-of-time and tuneless music.

Nathan White,
Walsall.

P.S. I am planning to buy the Chaos Engine; could you please tell me if it has a good soundtrack in it.

Yes, The Chaos Engine has brilliant music, now please go away.

* * * *

ANTIQUE ROADSHOW

Dear The One,
As an avid reader of your magazine, it was with great delight that I bought the May issue containing the Boulderdash clone, Balder's Grove. Imagine my disappointment to discover that because I have an antiquated machine running only Workbench 1.3 I am unable to sample its delights. I had up until now been considering buying a copy from many of the PD outlets, but none of these made mention of it only running on Workbench 2.0.

I tried loading various PD Workbench clones, but clicking on The One (C) icon revealed merely an empty box! Finally, reaching the purpose of my letter, is there any easy way of running this program, short of buying an Amiga 500+?

Terry Edwards,
Sutton.

The short answer is no, sadly. Obviously we normally try to put games on the disk that will work with everybody's Amigas but Balder's Grove only took up a tiny bit of spare disk space and as it was so good (sorry to rub it in) we thought it was worth sticking on. We'll try not to let similar things happen again in the future, okay?

* * * *

NOT-SO-TOUGH NUT

Dear The One,
I'm writing in reply to Martin from Darlington who had his letter printed in the May issue. I find cheats very useful as I've been stuck halfway through a game on a number of occasions and have been unable to get any further without the use of passwords and cheat-modes.

Not all of us are perfect like Martin - maybe he should write computer games or take up stamp collecting as he must get fed up with finishing every game he buys without having to use cheats.

Finally, have you ever thought about having a pen-pal section in your mag so that readers can write to each other about games, game-swaps and general info? I think it would be a great idea.

Mark Barlow,
Maidenhead.

We have considered doing a sort of 'contacts' page and it would be a nice thing to have but in the past we've found that unscrupulous types exploit such sections to sell or swap pirated games. So the answer is no, unfortunately.

* * * *

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS...

Dear The One,
I've noticed that several letters you print aren't letters at all, more an endless list of questions. Can't you give these people a separate area of the magazine, a Question Corner if you like, so that the Letters pages can remain virtually question free?

Rebecca Coombes,
Southampton.

Well, your letter would go in there straight away, wouldn't it? But, sarcasm out of the way, that's not a bad idea. What do other readers think?

* * * *

EXAM WORRIES

Dear The One,
I've got a couple of suggestions for you which you'd better print because I should be studying for my

exams instead of writing this.

First of all, could you do a special article about musicians and graphic artists who have made a record or something on television? This way I can show it to my PC 'friends' and laugh at them.

Also, can you do a special edition with tips only? The best thing in your magazine is the Kill Zone and I have seen a special edition by Amiga Power or Action or some other inferior Amiga Magazine. Don't stay behind the times!

Niels Royers, Holland.

What a bitter and twisted young man! Don't you think those PC scruffs have got enough to worry about without you waving yet more evidence in their faces proving that the Amiga is the best computer in the cosmiverse? As to your bumper Kill Zone magazine suggestion, we're thinking about it...

* * * *

STAFF WRITER

Dear The One,

Just a short note to declare my undying love for Kathy Staff. I think she's completely brilliant and anyone who says otherwise can sod right off.

Paul Hart-Wilden, Southend.

Fair enough, Paul. Each to their own...

* * * *

SAD

Dear The One

After reading the May issue or your excellent magazine, I'm afraid I have a complaint. How could you do it? Do you have no taste? I am, of course, referring to the hideous picture of Elton John.

Now, if it had been Madonna (phwoar, etc) I would have bought every single issue of The One from all the newsagents in my area, but there you go.

I'm willing to let is pass just this once, but please try not to let it happen again!

Gary Mitchell, Basildon.

Well congratulations. If you wanted to make Simon cry then you've succeeded. How can you utter such blasphemy against the marvellous Elts (as we call him, he being yet another one of our great showbiz mates)? As the tunesmith who penned such classics as Crocodile Rock, Nikita and I'm Still Standing we take great exception to your letter. We wouldn't mind so much but you then go on to say you like Madonna... Need we say more?

* * * *

YO-HO-HO!

Dear The One,

Sorry for bringing up this old chestnut again, but I've just read your April '93 Work In Progress on the latest James Pond adventure, Operation Starfish, and I am seriously bothered by... yes, you guessed it, piracy.

This latest Millennium goody is due for release on the A1200 in May but the standard version isn't coming out until September, because of the threat of piracy.

About twelve months ago, I laid out nearly three hundred of my hard-earned 'greenbacks' on an A600, which included a 'freebie' flight sim. Over the past twelve months I must have been offered over one hundred pirate copies of different Amiga games, but I can categorically state that I have not taken a single one. Being fairly hard-up, though, I still have only three titles in my collection* - but at least they are all originals.

When are these pirates going to get a life and realise that this latest move of releasing an A1200 version before the standard one is just the next step towards the total abandonment of games for the ordinary Amiga?

And it's no good expecting the pirates to shoulder all the blame either - if ordinary gamers didn't pay them their £1 a disk (or whatever they charge) then the pirates would soon 'bobby-off' and occupy themselves in some other equally meaningless pursuit.

So, my message (or is this becoming a sermon?) is... stand up and be counted, because it's no good expecting the software companies to keep carrying the costs of being ripped-off - sooner or later they will simply pull the game-plug and then we'll all suffer, innocent or not.

Yours in hope,

Glenn Turner, Brimington.

* * * *

X-WING WHINGER

Dear The One,

The main reason I'm writing to you is about X-Wing on the Amiga. When I opened the April issue and looked at the contents, I noticed that X-Wing was in your News section. My heart started beating really fast and my fingers were quickly running through the magazine. I made it to the News section and started to read. The joyous feeling of having X-Wing on the Amiga was shattered into little bits of rage and anger. I didn't laugh at the joke. (Oh dear, sorry - Ed.)

I'm not complaining to you,

FRONTIER AFFRONTERY

Dear The One,

Ever since I worked up to the rank of Elite and got fed up looking for missions, I have eagerly awaited the sequel to the best game of all time - Elite 2. However, since your twelve-page Work In Progress several months ago, nobody has seen or heard anything else. And since it was meant to be released at Christmas (Christmas '92, I mean) where is it? Please use your incredible influence to at least get a release date for all the millions of Elite fans out here. We can't wait much longer.

James Priddis, Amersham.

* * * *

Dear The One

Before I begin, I would just like to make a couple of comments. Ahem.

100,000,000,000 planets. Elite. Intergalactic exclusive. Argh! Braben is God. I wanna be a pirate. Fourteen months. This man is dangerous. No! No! No! I want Frontier and I want it now! Death to Konami.

There, finished. In case you haven't guessed, this concerns that game of games, Frontier. I'll say it again. Frontier, Frontier, Frontier. Just that word gets me trembling.

Let me begin my sad, sad story. I first heard of Frontier in July 1992 and consequently wet my trousers (the shopkeeper was very understanding). I formed a committee which would worship Frontier and his excellency Mr David Braben (severe tugging of forelocks).

We kept up the religion by worshipping the Elite manual and reading The One Work In Progresses up until September 1992 when the WIP ended, but the vigil remained because we knew it would be out by January. Time went by, I sold my 500+ and bought an A1200 and then January came. I think you can guess the rest.

After January came February, then April as the release date. I wept heavily but I new that I could hold out for those extra couple of months. The rest of my tribe (namely D. Rowe) defected to the word of G. Lucas and left me to face the release date. NOW! Now, I find that Frontier will not be out until June and somebody even told me that a certain TV show says it's out in September, making it fourteen months I will have waited for it. There aren't many school desks left to scribe Frontier onto, I am desperate.

Maybe (and I mean MAYBE) I could wait until September if nurse gives me enough of those nice yellow pills. I might just make it but I have one last thing to scream, I don't know if it even works on my A1200. SSSSSSSSSSCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCCR-RRRRRRRRRRRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEAAAAAAAA AAAAAAAAAAMMMMMMMMMM!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Thank you for listening. I'm going to see the nice doctor for my medication now, a nice three-hour blast of Elite and maybe another read of The Dark Wheel and your WIP.

Patient #100,000,000,000, Arkham Asylum.

P.S. Wibble.

P.P.S. Frontier.

Believe me, we're as desperate to see the game as you are (well, nearly). Latest word is the game is very, very nearly finished - that man Braben does like to get it right, you know - and should indeed be on sale in September. And apparently it does work on the A1200 and very nicely too. Not long to wait now. Really.

just like to say a few words to LucasArts and US Gold: I have bought several of your games and have found them of good quality. I know you use Amigas for your Industrial Light and Magic so I don't want to hear any of this crap that Amigas can't handle the graphics and animation. I think that you American programmers should get off your lazy butts for I and every other Amiga owner knows that there is not a better computer in the world for graphics and animation than the Amiga!

The new Amiga 1200 and 4000 are out now. I suggest you take full advantage of this machine - both these machines can beat a 486 any day. Thank you for listening.

Jim Millard.

It's true. There's no real reason, technically anyway, why X-Wing couldn't be done on the Amiga, certainly the A1200. It's a pity but... that's life.

* * * *

DIVE, DIVE, DIVE!

Dear The One,
Having just read the May edition of The One, I have to say that I'm bloody furious. No, not with you, but at some of the software houses who seem to be ditching the Amiga just as Commodore have breathed a much welcomed breath of fresh air into the market place.

Not long before Commodore released the A1200, I was seriously thinking about buying a PC, especially as even an Amiga fanatic such as myself couldn't deny the excellent software being developed for the PC. After the launch of the A1200, I immediately fell in love with this all-new powerful machine and bought one as soon as my old lady would allow it, bless her little cotton socks.

I mean, you could run most of your current games, promises of cheaper hard drives at last, ten to fifteen A1200 only games by Easter 1993, the likelihood of many quality PC titles ported over as well and at an affordable price. Who could ask for anything more?

So here we are, six months down the road. Easter has come and gone. What do we find? Many top developers pulling out of the Amiga, little or no conversions of popular PC titles and no real quality A1200-only games, well, not for at least another six months. Although I do understand that games need a good twelve twelve to eighteen months in development why, then, are we promised a number of titles before Easter? Surely that wasn't a sales incentive, was it?

Come on lads, the A1200 is a winner - let's see some support. Already sales of this fine computer have topped 100,000 in three to four months and the trend is set to explode over the next year as gamers scramble to upgrade. I'm sure most A1200 owners are of a more mature age than the average gamer so I don't feel piracy will be a problem, at least in the short to medium term, so come on softies - stop listening to the gloom merchants and back the machine of the nineties.

Pat McGrath,
Luton.

The situation isn't quite as bleak as you paint it. There's little chance of the Amiga being dumped - it just wouldn't make sense, what with the huge user base out there.

And you can rest assured that there IS loads of stuff coming out for the A1200. Team 17, Millennium, Empire, Ocean, Gremlin and Psygnosis are just a few of the software houses already developing games that'll make full use of the Super Amiga. Yes, it is taking quite a while for these games to come through - it's new machine, you see - but, rest assured, your patience will be rewarded.

* * * *

MADNESS...

Dear The One,
Having read the May issue of your astoundingly diabolical magazine, I must say that your standards have dropped dramatically. Allowing that 'Incredibly Bizarre' piece of surreal crap into your normally unbelievably prestigious letters page was a dreadful mistake - not only was it unfunny, unimaginative and unintelligent, it was was also completely irrelevant to anything ever known in the entire history of this planet. It was also non-incredibly bizarre.

You may just have thought of this desperately unentertaining drivel as a joke but, unfortunately, the consequences of publishing this petty excuse for a letter far escape your imagination. By allowing this deceptively innocent person a fraction of space in your monthly publication you have unwittingly cleared the final obstacle from the pathway to supreme power and divine capabilities - yes, by printing this nonsense you have provided Neil Jack with the means to become a GOD!

By giving this insane surrealist any amount of publicity at all you have given him the key to supreme godhood. Had it only been a normal letter and not the Star onethe limits of his powers would have been reduced slightly.

He now has the supremely inane power to cast plagues of locusts and frogs and penguins, the ability to shorten queues at bank cash dispensers and the means to establish the Atari ST as a popular home computer. (Ohmigod! -Ed.)

The only way to withstand his manic onslaught is to:

(1) Read steps 2-7 of this list.

(2) Obtain the lungs of a sheep.

(3) Obtain the teeth of a sheep.

(4) Obtain the eyes of a... sheep.

(5) Put all the little bits of sheep into a jiffy bag (this part takes patience and persistence).

(6) Pour approx. 25ml of yoghurt into said jiffy bag (the one with all the bits of sheep in it).

(7) Sprinkle crushed chocolate digestives over surface of yoghurt (in the jiffy bag with the sheep).

After completing these tasks (outrageous as they may seem), mail the jiffy to Mr Jack. The shock should dispell all of his godly powers (but make sure you get his address right).

On behalf of the world, thank you.

Nolan the Wizened Wizard.

P.S. Please hurry, as Mr Jack's ego has swollen to twice the size of a large male aardvark.

Oh, our readers. Don't you just love 'em? You try to turn the letters page into a forum for serious debate and what happens? You get this sort of garbage. I give up, i really do.

* * * *

SO SIZE DOES MATTER!

Dear The One,
I have only recently become an Amiga owner and there's one point I'd like you to clarify for me. And that is: Why is the packaging for computer software so big?

This might only seem like a minor point, so I have listed a few points to substantiate my question:

(1) Surely the move to smaller boxes would be better for the environment as it would use less cardboard?

(2) If the boxes were smaller then production costs would go down and software could be sold a little cheaper (hopefully by 50%, wishfull thinking).

(3) Smaller packaging would prevent the disks moving too much and so eliminate the chance of the disks being damaged.

(4) They wouldn't take up so much damn space (unless you have a spare garage).

Regarding Point 2 you only have to look the Kixx budget range. They're packaged in smaller boxes and the price is reduced, and I assume they were packed in larger boxes when they were sold at normal price.

Mark Greenshields,
Chichester.

The size of game boxes is a puzzle that has perplexed philosophers for centuries. I agree that it's ridiculous when you get a new game and open it up all you find inside is a small leaflet and a couple of disks rattling about. On the other hand you get games like F1GP where the box is full to the brim with stuff. The reason Kixx games cost less isn't due to the size of the packaging - the difference in cost between a big box and a small box is negligible - but because the games are old titles re-released.

* * * *

THE NAME STAYS THE SAME...

Dear The One,
I'm writing to tell you something. I can't hold it in much longer. I've got to tell you. You might not believe this but my name is David Upchurch, just like the editor of your magazine! I'm not lying - that is my real name!

Anyway, I have a few questions:

(1) For my birthday I'm joining Special Reserve and buying Body Blows, Superfrog and Sensible Soccer 92/93. Are these good choices?

(2) I'm thinkinh of buying a second disk drives. But is it worth having one just for playing games?

David Upchurch,
Jacksdale.

Good lord! That's absolutely incredible! Do you know what? My mum and dad have got the surname Upchurch too! Isn't it a small world? As to your questions, yes, all the games you mention are top quality, assuming you like beat-'em-ups, platformers and footy sims! Seriously, I don't think you'll go far wrong with them - enjoy! Second disk drives are a handy luxury if you can afford them, removing much of the tedious disk swapping you get with a lot of games.



Courtesy of Virgin

WIN! ER, SOME BALLS!!!

(worth thirty quids each!)

Where would we be without balls? Nowhere, that's where. There would be no Eurovision Song Contest singer Michael, the Albert Hall wouldn't contain Hitler's other and you couldn't get drunk with your mates and have a. And more importantly, there'd be no game of foot.

What, prey, would Dino Dini have done then? Not much, I can tell you. You see, the man's been responsible for arguably two of the finest soccer sims to grace the Amiga and now he's back in a big way with Goal! which you'll find reviewed in this here issue.

So pleased is Virgin with the sheer excellence of Dino's latest game that they've given us thirty (yes, thirty!) Adidas footballs to give away to you. They must be quite good because they've got 'Official Fifa Officiel' plastered all over them and their stitching and shape is guaranteed for one year, no less. On top of all that, Goal! creator Mr Dini has personally signed every single one, making them strictly limited edition and a prize well worth having.

Hey! Don't worry if you're not into kicking a spherical leather inflatable around a muddy pitch - there are plenty of other things that you can do with footballs, as we've found out. If you're wondering why the pictures scattered liberally around this page show nothing more than a sad member of The One team with a squidged-up 'thing' then we'd better let you know that if you are one of the winners, this will be how you receive your prize.

We were expecting to have a right laugh kicking these balls around in the basement of EMAP Towers but Virgin decided not to inflate the balls otherwise they would have "needed to use a bigger box". Our very own Mr Puff (Dave, obviously) had a go at blowing the balls up prior to our photoshoot but because he's full of so much hot air, they kept floating skywards and we had to retrieve them with a butterfly net.

SO JUST WHAT CAN YOU DO WITH A BALL?

Loads and loads and loads and loads and here's just a small selection.

If you're really pathetic you can pretend you're a girly by inserting one cunningly into your shirt. Unless, of course, you're a girl already in which case you can become Dolly Parton overnight.

If you've no proper girlfriend and you yearn for the days when you can be in the Family Way then win a ball and miss all the messy bits. Don't they look sweet?

Alternatively, if you've been having one of those tired, stressful and hectic days in the office then try and shirk out of all work and hide under a mountain of footballs where nobody can find you. Except they can, of course.

If you're a sensible-type then you'll be wanting to exhale loads of times into the handy hole at the end of the football so that it will regain its proper shape and you can be down the pitch with the lads.



Alas, poor Caption, I never read Shakespeare. But you can pretend you know something about England's most famous Bard by balancing it on your hand and poncing around for a bit.

THE COMPETITION

You were wondering when we'd get round to this bit, weren't you? There's not much space left so I'll get down to the nitty-gritty right away. We want you to answer the true/false questions below, stick the answers on the back of a postcard and send it to: A Load Of New Balls Compo, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU to arrive here by 28th June after which we'll pick thirty winners out who will each receive an autographed Adidas football. All the usual The One competition rules apply (whatever they are) and no correspondence will be entered into.

THE QUESTIONS

(1) A game of Snooker commences with a total of twenty one balls on the table. True or False?

(2) There's a road called Batman Close very near to where top football stars (and the best team in London) Queens Park Rangers Play. True or False?

(3) If you score a try in rugby, you're given the chance to attempt a Conversation. True or False?

ONE ON ONE

What would happen if three highly-respected games journalist were put in charge of their own software house? What would they do differently? David Upchurch talks to newly-formed Asylum and finds out...

YOU DON'T HAV TO WORK HERE

It's a gorgeous sunny day in beautiful Bath. Only one tiny black cloud blemishes the otherwise clear blue sky. Apparently, according to the locals, it's there all year around, lashing rain and lightning bolts down on the offices of Future Publishing beneath, home to arch-rival Amiga Power and once working place of Bob Wade, Andy Wilton and Andy Smith.

The trio have now left behind that Munsters-like existence and recently, last March to be precise, formed their own software house, Asylum. It's an unusual move, but with well over twenty years worth of games reviewing experience between it's perhaps not so strange as it sounds. After all, you'd hope by now they'd know precisely what makes a good game.

After a wander down to the park to feed the ducks and a rather vicous pair of swans (and take a few snaps), we adjourned to a nearby French restaurant. There, as the fine wine flowed freely and tongues were duly loosened, I set the tape recorder running and began to find out just what Asylum is all about...

How did Asylum come to be formed?

AS: Literally down the pub: "Gosh! Wouldn't it be nice to run a software house? Yeah, but look at us - we're just poor journos who don't earn a crust."

BW: This is, what, about five years ago now, when we were all working on ACE together. That's when it was first seriously talked about it.

AS: Yeah, we thought we knew what made a good game and we thought we could publish good games. So when the opportunity arose for us to support ourselves financially we thought yes, let's do it.

So what made you want to become a software publisher?

AS: Well, personally, after six years in magazines I felt like a new challenge, doing something different. The computer leisure industry is great; it's exciting, it's fun, it's better than working in a shoe factory which I did for three years! And it's a laugh.

BW: I mean, that's pretty much the reason I'm in it. It is a new challenge for us. We've all done the journalistic thing for a long time so this is a new challenge and it's going to be fun. We enjoy being involved with games. Concept... design... programming... marketing... you know, the whole business of computer games is a lot of fun for us and, naturally, we all also in it for the money. We'd be silly if we didn't admit we want to make some money out of it!

> **"For people to be predicting the death of the Amiga is insane, to be honest."**
> **Bob Wade, Asylum.**

How difficult is it to set up your own software company?

BW: Not very. Once the decision is taken and you've got a game in development and you've got the finance to do it it's relatively straightforward.

AS: Knowing we had the game in development was the catalyst to getting the thing together.

BW: The hardest part is having to deal with the financial side of it, the bureaucracy, the pure administration of it. The whole time you're having to take advice from accountants, solicitors and all of that, and unless you've ever done that before it doesn't come naturally to anybody. If you get the right professional advice and have somebody who can guide you through all the stepping stones then it's relatively simple. Then it's just a matter of finance and having something to sell.

AW: Actually setting up a company isn't difficult, making it work is the hard part. So the real challenge is coming up. As a lot of people found out to their cost in the 80s, setting up a company is easy but making a go of it is another matter entirely...

So what are your aims with Asylum?

BW: The aim for us always has been to basically produce quality games, games that we would enjoy playing.

AS: That's the number one aim. We're not looking to publish twenty-five titles a year, or acquire huge licences, or sell four million units throughout Europe on the first day of ship out, or have six million people working for us...

BW: We want to be a small company producing a relatively small number of games per year and to be able to spend enough time with each one so that we can make them how we want them to be.

AS: We believe producing quality games will pay our wages!

BW: To be honest we're aware we're not going to be producing games that will appeal to everyone. That's not what we're attempting to do. What we are trying to do is write games that will appeal to us and hopefully they'll appeal to other people too. If you try to please other people, you know, and create games that you think people will like then you're in to dangerous territory...



(Left) Here's the vicious swan the Asylum boys warned me about and (right) here they are feeding the damn thing!

AW: ...How do you know you've got it right?

Being such a small company I guess your first release will be quite crucial...

AS: Absolutely. Your reputation is only as good as your last game. Thing is, we wouldn't release a game unless we had complete faith in it so we're not too worried on that score.

What do you think will set Asylum apart from other companies?



E TO BE MaD BUT...

AS: On a purely business/retail level the fact that we won't release anything until we know it's finished and we can get it into the shops on a certain day. On a customer level, I think simply the fact that... it's back to the old Imagine and Ultimate days, you know you're buying a good game. If you bought an Ultimate game you knew it was going to be great and you were going to enjoy it thoroughly.

Unless you had a C64...

BW: I liked those old arcade adventures, they were alright! You maybe managed to complete them a bit quickly but...

AS: It was okay if you had a Spectrum...

BW: Ultimate were the number one software house of their day and sold huge numbers because people trusted them. They'd bought Ultimate games before and hadn't been let down so they bought the next one that came along.

Is that the same sort of feeling you want to create with Asylum?

AS: Yeah. I'm not sure if every game we release will appeal to everyone who bought an Asylum game in the past. I'm sure we'll attract new people who like the particular genre we're doing.

BW: When anybody buys an Asylum game we want them to walk away from it and say 'Yeah, I got my money's worth. There's obviously been a lot of work out into this. I didn't find any huge frustrations or problems with it. I got however many hours, days or months of enjoyment out of it...'

AS: We want people to know that we realise that it's good gameplay that counts.

What do you think you can bring, as former games journalists, to the games publishing business?

AS: Experience of playing thousands of crap games! And knowing how to avoid making them.

BW: That's a key thing. I always remember when I was reviewing games that the games you had to spend longest playing were the worst ones, just to make absolutely sure it was that bad. You do that enough times and you get to know what drives people crazy.

AW: All working on ACE at the same time we all kind of collectively realised that there are an awful lot of bad games out there. I think that people buy games that 70-80-90% but they don't buy games that get 40 or 50% - they get filtered out by journalists saying 'This is awful'. It's the sheer volume of those mediocre or awful games that makes you think well, I could do this better.



Don't swoon girls! Here they are then, the three Asylum hunks. From left it's Bob Wade, Andy Smith and Andy Wilton.

Why do you think there are so many mediocre and bad games?

AW: Well, I think a lot of it is just down to business considerations. I mean the big problem is that a software publisher doesn't get any money for developing a piece of software until it's done, until they can actually sell the damn thing. And that means continually they've got bills to pay and they get into cashflow trouble. They simply run out of money even though they're going to get loads if they can hang on and make a really great game...

BW: The trouble with most software houses is that they're not run by games buyers, they're run by businessmen. And you have to do it that way - it's got to run as a business. So the emphasis is very much on getting 'product' out there and getting it to make money.

I hate that term - 'product'...
BW: That's what I hate. Within the industry games are always referred to as 'product'. Now if you're going out to buy a game you don't think 'What product am I going to buy today?'. The industry tends to think in those terms too much. And I think that's why, yeah, sometimes stuff just gets pushed out because someone's got a deadline to meet and a lot of corners get cut...

Do you think that's a problem you'll avoid with Asylum?
BW: Yes, absolutely. One of our major aims in programming games is to produce high-quality games and not to announce release dates and place advertising until the game is actually finished...
AS: ...And we know when it's going to be on the shelves. A lot of people commit themselves to a date, spend a lot of money on a big marketing campaign and create a huge consumer demand. If the programmer then turns around and says I'm sorry, there's something here that's not going to work and it's going to take another three months to sort out then that blows the whole campaign and that's hundreds of thousands of pounds wasted to all intents and purposes. We'd rather ride the hiccups and then do the good campaign and the rest of it.

> **"Our problem is we've got too many ideas for the resources available."**
> **Bob Wade, Asylum.**

What's the reaction been from the software industry to you starting your own company?
AS: Positive. Very positive. People have said they think it's excellent what we're doing. Big corporations have wished us the best of luck. A lot of people are very pleased to see us going on to Amiga to start with. Although it's slightly more difficult to go onto console it's not impossible but a lot of people have said it's great that we haven't just jumped straight onto the consoles...

Why is that?
AS: I think the Amiga market is extremely strong. Last year was Commodore's best year for hardware sales ever. There's a huge A500/600 user base. And it's a great machine for producing great games.
BW: A lot of people seem to have written it off already and that's crazy. The Amiga is going to around for a long, long time. There's a vast number of people out there with them and they're not going to go away. For people to be predicting the death of the Amiga is insane, to be honest.

So what can you tell us about your forthcoming game at this stage?
AW: Well, not very much. It's...
BW: ...Not a platform game!
AW: My forté is solid 3D. Beyond that there's not really much I can say at the moment.
AS: Sorry about that!

Have you got a name for it yet?
AS: Well, we've got a name we call it but we don't want to give it out yet as it's just a working title.

So after that's released, what?
AW: We've got germs of ideas for about three or four new games.
BW: Our problem is we've got too many ideas for the resources available. We'll have to sit down and work out which ones we'll have most fun with.

So do you see yourself ever doing PC or console stuff?
AS: Yeah, if the product lends itself to it, if it's feasible, if we think it'll be a fun thing and if we can make some money out it.
AW: From a development point of view, how much fun the hardware is to work on is very, very important. The main reason we're developing first on the Amiga is because I started working on the Amiga as it's the best piece of games hardware out there, as far as I'm concerned. It is a lovely machine. The A1200 is just out of this world, but the A500 machine is a damn good piece of hardware, tremendous fun to write for. I think you work best when you're happy. If we take a look at other pieces of hardware and they look fun and challenging then fine, but right now I see us sticking with the Amiga because it's such a wonderful piece of kit.

Do you see yourself doing any enhanced A1200 versions?
AW: Definitely. I think it's going to take a little while for the dust to settle but the A1200 can best be considered as another platform that's very similar to the mainstream Amiga. But it's got so much going for it. Everybody bangs on about the processor speed, but the amount of memory is very important and so's the number of colours.
BW: Everyone keeps going on about CD but it's just a storage medium. The A1200 is infinitely more exciting in its potential of what you can do with it. As with most computers it's going to take a while before people start extracting its full potential but I think people will still be getting excited about the A1200 long after CD storage is thought of as nothing more than another floppy disk.


Bob Wade takes a break from shoving dry bread down duck's gullets to pose for the camera.


Andy Wilton is Asylum's technical guru - he's been working on their first game for well over a year.

Finally then, where would you like to see yourselves in five years' time?
BW: On the beach.
AS: Retired, I think.
BW: No, I'd like to see us as a well-established software house, doing two, three, four games a year, still a relatively small company, a dozen-fifteen employees, still doing what we want to do when we want to do it and still putting out damn good games.
AS: Even if we were on the beach we'd probably still want to be playing games.

Well, Asylum, the best of luck to you. We look forward to your first release with interest...


Andy Smith is handling Asylum's marketing and PR. He's also known to make many a girl's heart flutter around the software industry, much like my gorgeous self.

THE EYES HAVE IT!

THE CRITICS HAVE CAST THEIR VOTE - FLASHBACK IS THE WINNER

“ Flashback... outperforms Another World - it's by far the deeper game of the two **”**

CIARAN BRENNAN
Games Retailer (UK)

“ This game has no equal in its field **”**

DOMINIC DIAMOND
Gamesmaster TV Series (UK)

“ Just awesome!... best Mega Drive game I've ever seen or played! **”**

PAUL GLANCEY
Megatech (UK)

“ ...there's over two-thirds of the year left and I can honestly state that Flashback is the game of the year! **”**

SIMON BYRON
The One Amiga (UK)

FLASHBACK



available for your Sega Mega Drive, PC & Compatibles and Amiga



IN THE BIZ

So you wanna be a games programmer? Fancy yourself as a hot-shot artist, eh? Like to play games all day? Then the computer industry may well be right up your street. Simon Byron finds out how Mr Joe Public can get...

It was just another fairly uneventful day at the office. Mr Posty arrived, grumpy as ever, and after a few ridiculing jibes about how we're as talented as something that's not very, he left to visit the pub next door "for purely medicinal reasons, you nosey gits".

"Blimey, here's another letter from Jodie Foster," moaned Dave, "when will she realise that I'm just not interested?"

"Exclusives, exclusives, exclusives..." I declared as I sorted through the post. "When will someone send us something interesting?"

But then, there it was - a small but perfectly-formed package shifting amongst the others; its sheer brilliance singeing the letters next to it.

Dave picked it up. "Ooh, my bloody hand," he cried, "that package is so hot it's given me blisters!"

Sasha, the lovely (and also heavily pregnant) Publisher's Assistant rose from her chair, adjusted her fashionable maternity dungarees and ambled over to the tearful Ed. Dave looked up. "Help me, for I am a fool," he cried, putting on what he presumed was a sorrowful face.

"Grow up, Upchurch," shrieked Sasha. "I couldn't care whether you live or die, I've come to load up that obviously special disk."

Until then we hadn't noticed what was inside the package but Sasha, because she's a practical girly and all that, had got its number and no mistake. Wearing some conveniently discovered asbestos gloves, she moved over to the vast gaming area and selected one of our fifty trillion Amigas.

The game was Blaster and the rest, as they say, is history. We contacted the writer, gave him a huge wad of cash and in return he gave us permission to put the game on our coverdisk. A few days later, when we were having a bit of a high score competition (which I won, by the way), Dave said the worst thing I've ever heard him say: "It might not look like much, but in terms of playability it's way above some of the dire commercial releases I've seen."

A light appeared above his head. "I'm gonna do a feature on it. You know, like they did in Empire where they sent a script to film companies and printed the results. It could be very good." Then he realised how much hard work was involved. "Erm, why don't you do it," he delegated, "I'm too busy being an Editor. Or something."

So what you'll find over the next few pages are the results and if you've got any comments then please let us know. What it does show is the vast difference between some companies and the way they view the public's efforts. Far be it for us to name names, but it appears some software geezers wouldn't know a good game if it ram raided their offices in a huge yellow bus with 'Good Game' plastered all over it..

THE LETTER

Hmm, quite important, this. Below is the letter we sent all the software companies, completely made up by us. Notice how it cleverly doesn't state that 'R. Evans' wants Blaster published, all he would like are comments on the design and implementation of the game or a job offer. There was an address of a safe house where the replies were to be sent but we've had to omit that for security reasons, obviously.

Head of Product Management,
Big Software Publishers,
Amiga House,
A Road,
Probably,
Gameshire 123 ETC.

17th March 1993.

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed a copy of my game, BLASTER. I expect you receive hundreds of disks like this every week but if you would be so kind as to spare me five minutes of your valuable time then I think you'll be suitably impressed.

I have been programming computers since about 1986 when I owned a Commodore 64. From then I have progressed to the Commodore Amiga which I have owned for roughly three years. Although I have successfully completed a Computer Science course, most of my programming experience has been gained from books and just generally messing around with machine code and I believe I have now reached a stage where I could become a valuable asset to your company and think that Blaster more than demonstrates this. All the design, coding, graphics and music have been created by me and although the visuals may look slightly dated, you must remember that I'm not an artist at heart.

When the prompt appears, simply type 'Blaster.exe' and the game should then load. If you leave the game alone, a short rolling demo of each level will be played, which gives a pretty accurate impression of the game. I have enclosed a separate instruction sheet which details the game at great length.

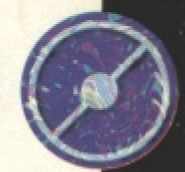
I am currently looking for a full-time job as a programmer and would be interested to hear any criticisms regarding the game, its design and any improvements you feel are needed to place it on par with the budget releases of today and if you do have any vacancies for a talented programmer like myself then please do not hesitate to contact me.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully,

R. Evans

- The date. Brilliant source of reference and guarantees that any letter you receive back begins with the words 'Thank you for your letter dated 17th March.'.
- The company's address, always useful so that the reader knows where he/she works. Also a valuable time saver if you use window envelopes and can get the positioning right.
- Opening paragraphs are one of the most important parts of a letter. If you make it lively, bold, informative and amusing then the reader is likely to continue reading. It's a shame that we weren't talented enough to do that.
- Lies, lies, lies. Our 'R. Evans' is a complete figment of our imaginations and his abbreviated life history is one big whopping untruth. We baffled 'em at every turn.
- As we didn't know how to make a self-booting disk, we thought it wise to include some handy instructions on how to load the game. We think of everything, you know.
- I look forward to your reply! Ha! You bet we do. If only they knew that the Amiga games community would soon be reading their words of wisdom.



Here, in no particular order apart from alphabetic, is a list of the companies/developers who received the letter one morning...

Admiral Software	Daze Marketing	Gremlin	Ocean
Audiogenic	DMA Design	ICE	Psygnosis
Bullfrog	Domark	Krisalis	Renegade
CodeMasters	Electronic Arts	MicroProse	Virgin Games
Core Design	Empire	Millennium	Zeppelin Games
Creative Materials	Grandslam	Mindscape	

KRISALIS

The first letter past and in the post was from those lovable funsters at Krisalis. The scrawl at the bottom of the page indicates that A. J. Kavanagh looked at Blaster, but he couldn't be bothered to sign it himself, giving the task to what looks like Claire L. Brown. Aren't we important enough for you 'A'?

The letter itself is fairly informal. Note the 'many thanks' as opposed to 'thank you', indicating that we're already great mates with 'A.'. He doesn't seem too interested in the game, though, but you couldn't really argue with the way he informs us. Fairly nice letterhead too, printed on expensive laid paper. Obviously doing alright for themselves.

When I spoke to Tony (short for Anthony, for some reason, although some people prefer to use 'Ant' which isn't very flattering and was also the name of that supposed hunk from out of Grange Hill - we'll stick with Tony for the time being) he admitted to not actually recalling the game. "We do get quite a lot in. They all get put on my desk and I immediately, and I mean immediately, go straight across to the computers and carefully go



Dear Mr Evans

Many thanks for your recent letter enclosing your game "Blaster".

After having viewed your game, it is not the type of product we are looking to publish. However, should you should you have any other games that you think may be of interest to us please forward them on.

With regards to any vacancies within our company. We have recently employed extra programmers and currently do not have any further vacancies.

However, many thanks for your interest.

Kind regards

A J Kavanagh
Managing Director

Enc.

through what's been sent in, just in case another Lemmings turns up.

"We look at everything that is sent in. Most of the letters we receive usually say 'please don't take any notice of the graphics - I'm not a graphic artist' so even if it looks terrible we'll still consider it. Premier Manager came through to us before anyone else had snapped it up and we thought 'This is brilliant'. We immediately rang them up but were told 'Sorry, Gremlin's just signed it'. We don't want that to happen again.

"We have got one game that is coming up which we've commissioned and it's our first title which has been developed out-of-house. When it came in, the animation was already absolutely unbelievable and the couple of lads who are working on the game were initially a little skeptical because they'd had some offers from a French company in the past for another product and nothing came of it. These guys were really determined to get in the industry, even to the stage of one of them living off Social Security and the other getting kicked out of his parents' house because he wouldn't get a 'proper' job."

"The problem nowadays is that you need to write games as a team whereas a few years ago you could do everything on your own. The majority of stuff that does arrive in the post is very laudable, we've offered jobs to some of the lads who have sent stuff in but it's rare to find anything which is of near-publishable quality."

"Over the last three years or so we've been taking computer science graduates on and we now don't bother advertising anywhere apart from in the local press. These people read the adverts, come along and are desperate to get in the computer games industry, both hardware and software. They're absolutely brilliant - we haven't take on a fully experienced programmer for two years."



PRIORITY HOUSE CHARLES AVENUE BURGESS HILL WEST SUSSEX RH15 9PQ

Dear Mr Evans,

Thank you very much for your letter and enclosed disk of "Blaster" and its overview, which we will be reviewing shortly.

We are in fact looking for experienced Computer Programmers, the languages that we use here are Assembly, specialising in 68516, 6502, 68000 and Z80, are you by any chance conversant with these? If this is the case could you send us an up-dated Curriculum Vitae so we can review this together with your game submission.

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your interest in the Company and I look forward to hearing from you again soon.

Yours sincerely,

Juliet

JULIET A. PITT
DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATOR



Dear Mr Evans
Thank you for writing to Gremlin Graphics and sending in your demo.

We were very impressed with the presentation and design skills shown. You have obviously spent a considerable amount of time and effort in completing this project and it should not go without a thank you.

The plot itself seems an interesting idea, but, unfortunately, we feel it would not be suitable for our product range.

Once again, thank you for your interest in Gremlin Graphics, and may we wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

pp Diarmid Clarke
Projects Manager

Always ahead of their time

MINDSCAPE

Things are beginning to look up already! A fairly positive response from the Development Coordinator, and even the offer of an interview. Are we conversant with 65816, 6502, 68000 and Z80? Not half, matey! And look how the person has signed her name simply 'Juliet'. Hmm, Juliet Byron. It's got a certain ring to it, hasn't it? I think I'll give her a call.

"I'm not the one who does the reviewing," she claimed when I was finally put through to her. "Our product reviewer would be the person who assessed it but I don't know whether he's actually looked at it yet. Unfortunately we have a large backlog of games to review at the moment, could I ask you to call back and speak to him personally tomorrow?"

Hmmm, maybe our first impressions were a little wrong - they hadn't even looked at the game when they sent us the letter. Charming!





GREMLIN

After we'd recovered from the retina-burning brightness of the letterhead, we were actually a little disappointed that the compliments paid by Projects Manager Diarmid Clarke didn't conclude with 'Here's loads of money and a job'. They do seem pleasant enough people, though, as the letter is one of the friendliest our imaginary R. received.

"Blaster? R. Evans? Doesn't ring a bell," quipped Diarmid when I gave him a call. I decided to read the letter out over the phone. "That sounds like our standard reply," he revealed. "Unfortunately I haven't been around for the past three weeks, I might not even have looked at this one."

Typical. What do you need to do to catch Diarmid's attention, then? "The best thing to do is send something in which looks fairly professional. We probably get about twenty to thirty send-ins a week which can vary from a demo to a letter asking for a job. Something which looks like it's been put together well and not just photocopied and obviously sent to every other company will generally interest us more. A video will also get more attention as it shows that the programmer involved has got confidence in his work."

Well, if Gremlin do actually load up a game then what do they generally look for? "If we like what we see then we can generally get them to improve any bits which don't actually come up to scratch. When Premier Manager came in it was obviously not as polished as the finished version but because it was already playable we could turn round and state what graphical enhancements we wanted. With something like a shoot-'em-up you need to be instantly able to pick it up and not just look at a hardware background."

Do Gremlin employ many Joe Publics? "We do tend to take people in depending on whether what they send in is any good but it is rare - I've been in the industry for five years and I've only seen about half a dozen games taken on from send-ins. You get so much that is just the same, you know, scrolly demo messages and the like.

"Graphic artists are easier to come across. We sometimes get some really good artwork sent in, but the problem that some people don't realise is that we aren't really interested in seeing digitised pictures which anyone can just scan in. A couple of people sent in some brilliant hand-drawn artwork and if we had a vacant position then we would definitely take them on."

MILLENNIUM

Lethargic Ian Saunter is the man behind these words. Obviously not one for business letters, Ian demonstrates his dry sense of humour by opening with 'Dear R.', which we quite like.

In terms of content, we couldn't have hoped for a better response. He's not exactly subtle in praise and we actually felt good about life after having read his letter. Trouble is, though, he's not the easiest of people to get hold of on the phone so chatting to him could present a minor problem.

After several "He's in a meeting, I'm afraid"s, we finally caught Ian's attention long enough to hurl a few questions at him.

"So you did it?" he replied after I'd explained about our little trick. "I was wondering why he hadn't replied to our letter. I was very impressed with Blaster. It was fast and it demonstrated a good grasp of what can be done with the Amiga."

Unfortunately we'll have to stop right there as the rest of the tape contained loads of feedback and stuff like that so I can't accurately transcribe the details of the remainder of the conversation. I do know that Ian revealed that he was desperate to chat to the real 'R.' and that Millennium always looked carefully at any games sent to them from the 'man on the street'.





If you've got the talent and just a little bit of luck on your side then it's possible that a major software house will buy your game, much as Core Design did with Doodlebug.

CORE DESIGN

Another promising reply. Jovial Jeremy Smith, Core's so-called MD, responded with a concise letter which didn't really go into any great detail but the underlying message was promising if nothing else. He's looking forward to hearing from us soon, so let's put him out of his misery, shall we?

"It was good if I remember rightly," recalled Jeremy. "It's hard remembering them all because we must get about ten send-ins a week."

Jeremy reckoned that Core employs quite a few people as the result of send-ins. "I'd say that about twenty percent of our programmers have been taken on like that. It's the best way to get into the software industry, especially with companies like us, but if you apply to some of the larger companies then they tend to want to see a little bit more. We like to give people a chance to prove what they can do."

Have Core ever commissioned anything from a send-in? "Doodlebug started off like that. The programmer sent us in the finished game and we signed it up there and then."

It was at this point that Jeremy remembered why he 'looked forward to hearing from you soon'. "We're doing a game called Blastar and I wanted him to change the name of his game," he joked.




MILLENNIUM

Dear 'R',

Thanks for sending us your demo of Blaster for the Amiga. We have taken a look at the game and agree with you that it demonstrates a good level of proficiency with the machine.

It is not every day that we receive submissions of this standard, and whilst we would not be presently interested in publishing this style of game, I would be happy to see you in Cambridge to discuss the prospects of you working here as a games programmer. We are in the process of interviewing a number of programmers to join us here, so your submission is timely.

I am unable to reach you by phone in order to fix up an appointment, but if you would like to take things further, then please call me as soon as possible so that we can get together. I look forward to hearing from you.

You sincerely

Ian Saunter
Development Director

Millennium Interactive Limited
Quern House
Mill Court
Great Shelford
Cambridge CB2 5LD
Telephone: 0223 844894
Facsimile: 0223 844918

CORE
DESIGN LIMITED

Tradewinds House
69/71A Ashbourne Road
Derby. DE22 3FS.
Telephone: (0332) 297797
Facsimile: (0332) 381511

Dear Mr. Evans,

Thank you for sending me the demo of your game Blaster

I would be interested to discuss with you a possible vacancy at Core Design, therefore, if you would contact me at the office we can arrange an interview.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind regards

Jeremy H Smith
Managing Director

Registered in England No. 2257936 VAT Reg. No. 507 7305 56



BULLFROG

Another 'Many Thanks', this time from Peter Molyneux (or Molineux, if you happen to work on a spelling-challenged Action mag). Kathy McEntee is the woman we're told to contact as she'd like to arrange a mutually convenient appointment with us. Sorry, love, it we're not really interested in arranging an interview ourselves, we'll stick with Peter, if it's all the same to you.

"I was very impressed with Blaster," he enthused, "and spent a lot of time playing it. It was obvious that he'd worked hard on the game and we'd be interested in meeting up with him."

So what do Bullfrog tend to look for in a new game from a member of the public? "The most important thing for us is originality. Blaster didn't have anything hugely original but there are occasionally indefinable qualities in a game which make it instantly playable. If someone can do everything in a game like Blaster off their own back and without anybody standing over their shoulder then they have got it in them to do a really, really good programming job.

"We employ a fair amount of people 'off the streets'. I would say a good half of the people working here have been taken in on the strength of demos and games sent in. I think the best way of getting a job within the industry is by having something concrete to show - it's all very well ringing someone up and asking for a job but if you've actually got something to show then you don't have to rely on your personality to sell you."

Surprisingly, Peter reckoned that Bullfrog only receive about two or three games a week. "The majority are really... not good at all. However, some may be really badly programmed with terrible graphics but if the idea is good then we'll certainly consider it."

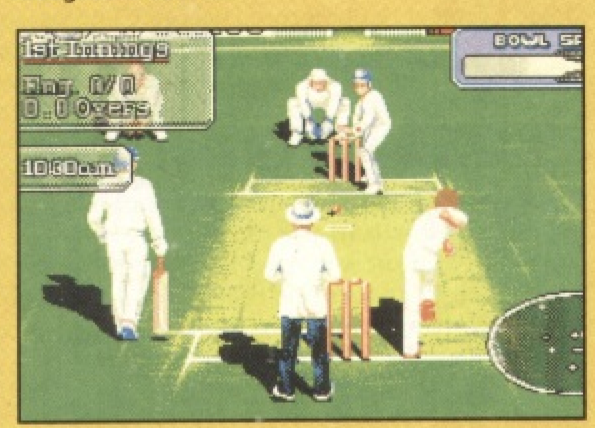
AUDIOGENIC

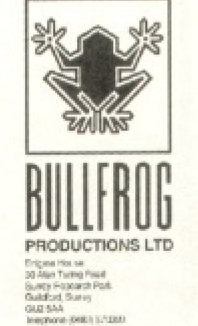
Oh dear. It's time to shove a loaded gun in our gobs and pull the trigger - Audiogenic's letter isn't very nice at all. Peter Calver responded none too tactfully but at least he detailed his reasons for not thinking the game is as great as we do.

"I'm just trying to remember which game it was, we get so many," Peter mused, "was it the Moon Cresta-ish one? Oh yes, as a PD thing, it was nice, the guy is obviously a competent programmer but he's not an artist or a games designer, which is what I said in the letter.

"I'm not a shoot-'em-up fan myself but I got a couple of people who do like that sort of thing to look at it and one of them, someone who doesn't work for the company and is therefore a potential purchaser, didn't like it at all. There are a lot of programmers around but it's picking the good ones that is the hard part. We don't expect programmers to be able to design games but what we are looking for is attention to detail - the graphics may be awful but the collision detection needs to be spot on.

What would Peter's advice be to people wanting to get in the software industry? "It's very difficult, seeing as there's no course you can take in learning how to program games. I've felt for a long time that the industry ought to set up its own training scheme as only the larger publishers can afford to teach new programmers. Companies like Argonaut take people in straight from university but it's difficult trying to run a business and train people at the same time. I think there would be a very big demand for some form of recognised course."





Dear Mr Evans
Many thanks for your letter dated 17th March 1993. We have read your letter with interest and invite you to telephone Kathy McEntee on the above telephone number with a view to arranging a mutually convenient appointment for you to have an interview with us.

We look forward to hearing from you and meantime thank you for your interest shown in Bullfrog.

Your sincerely

Peter Molyneux
Director



Dear Mr Evans,
Thank you for your letter of March 17 enclosing a copy of Blaster for the Amiga. We don't publish budget software, but I'm certain that any budget company would require very substantial changes to your game, as it really isn't much more than Space Invaders. However, I found the music interesting, though it probably wouldn't be to everyone's taste.

These days the jobs of designer, programmer, artist and musician are usually handled by four different people, as few can be expert at more than one of these. It's difficult to judge your programming ability on the basis of Blaster, as you've done everything in the game and it shows.

If you do have any other demos you might like to send them along. We are not actively looking for programmers at the moment (most of our programs are written by outside teams that we use regularly), but the situation could change at any time.

Yours truly,

Peter Calver
Managing Director

Audiogenic Software Limited
Unit 27, Christchurch Industrial Centre, Wealdstone, Harrow HA3 8NT, England
Telephone +44 (0) 81 424 2244 Facsimile +44 (0) 81 861 1773





Dear Mr Evans,

Thank you for thinking of us in sending out this demonstration of your work, we are always interested in new projects.

I'm afraid that we cannot use your program "Blaster" in our plans for 1993. The game is fairly addictive, but we feel that the market currently expects something more sophisticated.

Although there is a lot going on on the screen, the game is let down by the ancient nature of the design. The music is atmospheric and the graphics - though simple - are adequate but this kind of game has been done so often before that it no longer appeals. Interactive, scrolling backgrounds may have helped.

If you wish to send us something else at some time in the future, we would be happy to consider it.

Your sincerely,

Gareth Briggs
Head Of Development

DMA Design
DISCOVERY HOUSE, DUNDEE TECHNOLOGY PARK, DUNDEE DD2 1TY. UNITED KINGDOM
Telephone UK: 0382 561333 Fax: 0382 562333

Dear Mr Blaster,

Thank you for your recent letter and Amiga Demo which we played with interest. It was much more polished than many we receive and you seem to have no problem in handling sprite routines. Unfortunately we are not recruiting Amiga programmers at present. If you are writing to other companies can I suggest that you include a printout of sections of your code? This enables us to see how you have structured and commented your code. Very important for multi-programmer projects!
Best of luck in future applications

Simon Little

ZEPPELIN GAMES

Now this was one of our big hopes, what with them being a budget publisher and all that, but it looks as if 'R.' will have to wait just a little longer before he can legitimately nosh at the Zeppelin Games Staff Canteen (if they've got one, that is). That said, though, Gareth Briggs was the first person to actually respond with constructive criticism which proves that he actually spent a good deal of time with the game. I gave him a call to find out a bit more.

"When we evaluate a game, depending on the size, of course, we try to play through as much as we need to - even to the extent of finishing some of the demos we've received. Someone may well send something in which isn't very good but if by making a few changes we can get it up to publishable standard then we will notify them of those alterations and ask them to send something back. It can go on like this until eventually, if they keep sending revised versions in, we'll end up with a marketable game."

Does Gareth look at game designs as well as finished programs? "We look at everything. That said, though, a lot of game designs we do receive are just rehashed variations of the game the writer has just been playing. It's very difficult nowadays to come up with a completely original game design."



DMA DESIGN

Simon Little and his DMA chums just scraped into the list of companies who replied within our time limit. Leaving it until the very last minute, imaginary 'R.' was overjoyed to receive this complimentary letter, even if there was no job offer.

Was what R. Evans did the best way into DMA Design? "Certainly a demo game is a start, but what is more interesting for us is to include some source code so that we can actually see how the person has gone about programming the game. A lot of the demos we get sent in are very much 'demos' in the sense that there are lots of colourful balls floating around the screen and you have no idea how they've written it.

"We don't receive that many demos but everything gets looked at. We've just received something from some guys who live locally and we're taken those guys on so, yes, it does work."

So how did Simon get into the industry? "I was into computing in the early eighties and then went on to do a joint degree in high-level and real-time programming. It was there that I met the founder of DMA Design. There are one or two of us who graduated from that course who have ended up working for DMA, mainly because we know what the course was about and that it's relevant to games. A lot of degrees are very high-brow but don't go into the level of detail that you need to program games."

TWELFTH HOUR REPRIEVE

Electronic Arts and Psygnosis managed to reply just before the issue went to press and we thought it only fair to let you know. Neither offered any jobs and Psygnosis stressed that R. Evans's game scored very low originality marks.

CONCLUSION

A mixed response, I think you'll agree. It does show, however, that a few software companies really do take a lot of notice of 'send-in' games so if you've got the talent

then it's worth spending a few quid on disks and stamps to distribute your stuff around.

Also bear in mind a comment that a couple of people brought up; namely, that if your package looks as professional as possible then it's more likely to get attention. We realise that this shouldn't be the case as what matters at the end of the day is your programming abilities but - hey! - life is never how it should be.

If any softcos have any reasons for not replying that we don't know about then please let us know - we'll be happy to pass on any information. The reason that we didn't chase up the letters (as you should do) is that a few companies would pay more attention to us at The One than they would to a member of the public, and they'd probably fob us off with an excuse and write back within a few days with a reply which would not necessarily be the one we would have originally received. You can't trust anyone these days.

FAILED!

OH DEAR

If you compare the list of companies who we sent the disk and letter to with the letterheads printed over the past few pages then you'll notice that some softcos just didn't bother to reply within the five weeks that we allowed (you do have to draw the line somewhere).

There may well be countless reasons why we haven't received any response from these people and it's not really our place to judge or offer ideas as to what went wrong but here, for the record, are all the companies who didn't reply to poor 'R. Evans'...

Admiral Software	Daze Marketing	Grandslam	Psygnosis
CodeMasters	Domark	ICE	Renegade
Core Design	Electronic Arts	MicroProse	Virgin Games
Creative Materials	Empire	Ocean	

G'US A JOB

Of course, there are plenty of other jobs in the software industry so if you can't program to save your life then there may be an opening in another area. I spoke to six people who are currently employed in the biz about what they do and what it's like.

GAMES TESTER



If playing games all day long is your idea of heaven then perhaps being a Games Tester is the ideal job for you. I spoke to Sam Long who has been at Ocean since her working career began. She reveals how she became a Games Tester. "I became a Junior at Ocean when I left school which involved doing screenshots and the like. After I'd learnt how to do that I decided that I wanted to be a Games Tester. I had to go through an interview and all that but you don't need any real qualifications, you just have to be good at playing games."

Sam describes her average day. "I come in, sit down in front of a computer and play, basically. It is a good job. We have a good laugh and we enjoy playing games and everything but I wouldn't say it was easy. You've got to concentrate as at the end of the day you're responsible for finding bugs and passing games. We could be playing a game for anything between a week and a month, depending on what needs to be done to it."

So what are the good and the bad things about the job? "There isn't really anything bad about the job. I'm the only female tester among about twenty other lads but I don't get treated unfairly or anything."

Now here's the important part, what's the money like? "Well, it's not great but it's not terrible either."

GRAPHIC ARTIST



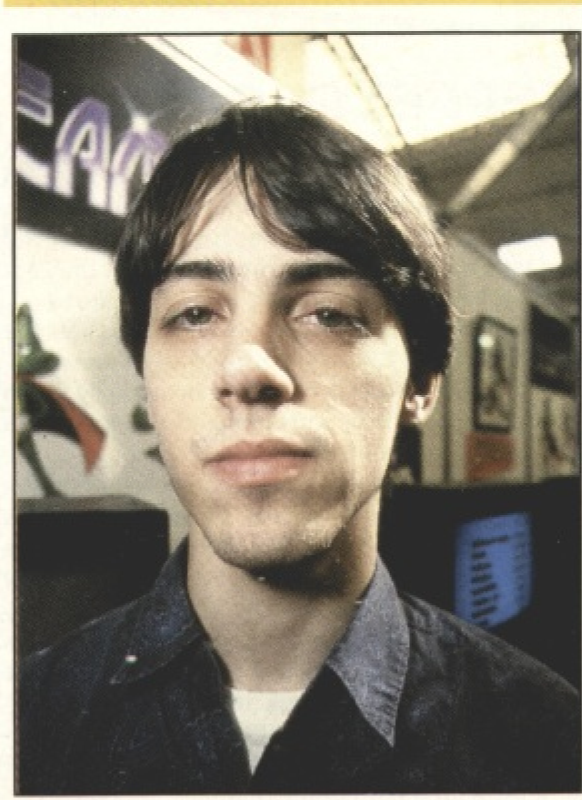
Denton Designs' Ally Noble is currently working on the visuals for Batman Returns and seeing as though they're looking so brilliant I decided to find out from her the best way to become a graphic artist. "You could either take the official route by getting a degree in Graphic Design, which helps, or just by being really enthusiastic and keen and sending examples of your work to various companies. It's best to try and avoid sending really big pictures as you don't tend to be working on large drawings like that when you're designing sprites. If you've got a friend who is a programmer then that can also help."

Ally laughs when I ask what her average day is like. "Hard work," she chuckles.

Good and bad points of the job? "A good thing about the job is the satisfaction you get when you finally see your graphics working within the game. Having to hold so much information in your head can be a bit hard - especially when you forget it!"

How much money can a graphic artist expect? "It depends who you work with," she says, rather tactfully.

MUSICIAN



Allister Brimble must be one of the most well-known Amiga musicians so I decided to give him a call to find out how he became involved in the aural side of the computer industry.

"I started off about three years ago by sending in some music demos to 17 Bit Software, which they liked and began to distribute. I then

decided to send a demo disk off to various software companies, including Codemasters who liked it and asked me to do the music for one of their games. It all started from there."

What's the average day for a musician? "I get up late, at about ten thirty, have some breakfast and come upstairs to the computer room to work on whatever project I'm currently involved with. Then I watch Neighbours at one thirty and carry on after that until dinner at six o'clock. From then on I can be working until any time during the night."

Good points? "I can work whenever I want, because I'm a freelance musician. I've been asked to join a few software houses but I don't think I could work under a controlled environment like that - I need my own studio with everything set up exactly how I want it. The money's good as well."

PRODUCT PRODUCER



Tony Bickley, Product Producer at US Gold, has been doing his job for roughly seven years so he seems like the ideal person to ask about this particular post within the software industry.

So how did he become a Product Producer? "Via programming, really. I became a Team Leader, which is a programmer who looks after other programmers. From there I became what they call an Assistant Producer, someone who no longer programs but looks after one to two products and finally on to Product Producer where you basically look after a number of games. It's not the only way to become a Product Producer - some people come in from the management side and there are college-types who come straight in from resource management but I'd say that a good eighty percent of the Product Producers in the computer games industry have worked their way up from programming."

"I start my day by phoning around the development houses because at USG we don't have any internal development people so we have to deal with outside developers. You have to chase up all the products which were supposed be done during the night because, when a game is running late, sometimes programmers have to work through the night to get the final version to me at nine in the morning.

"After all that, I help myself to a very large cup of coffee to overcome the fact that nothing's been done," he jokes. "Then I prepare a hit-list of everything that needs to be sorted out during the day, check through the various schedules of each one of my products and then work through what's called a bullet list, basically a hit-list of every product, which details the things which need to be done on that particular day for all my titles.

"Sometimes I can be obtaining information because the programmers are after some data, sometimes it's chasing up graphic artists and musicians or if there's a technical problem I oversee that side of it. I usually spend a couple of hours a day testing the games which have come in that day to check against a report that the games testers have provided me with.

"The good thing about this job is it's at the leading edge of the computer industry so you've got all the jazz, all the fun side of it. If a new machine comes on the market you can get up and running as soon as possible because you can find a programmer who knows about it rather than learning it yourself."

Finally, what's the money like? "Good."

PR EXECUTIVE



Being a journo means that you have to talk to the PR people almost every day, but what's it like being on the other end of the line? I spoke to Caroline Stokes (25, 25, 25) from out of Virgin Games about how she became involved in the PR side of things.

"I was working for a company outside of the computer industry but I desperately wanted to get back in. It was then that I bumped into Virgin's Marketing Manager Andrew Wright in an Irish pub and during the conversation that followed he asked me whether I'd like to be Marketing Executive. After four different interviews I eventually got the job.

"The best way to get a PR job would be to do a course beforehand like a BTec in Business and Finance which deals with advertising and marketing."

"My average day goes like this; phone call, phone call, phone call, mail-shots, mail-shots, mail-shots, having to talk to an awful lot of UK and foreign magazines across all formats, organising parties and just generally running around like a headless chicken. It does involve some fairly late nights."

Surely you must get loads and loads and loads of cash, then? "Depends on your age and experience."

MANAGING DIRECTOR



When Ian Stuart, Gremlin's Managing Director, heard about the feature we were doing on jobs in the industry he said "How did you know I was looking for a job?" We can't believe that as owning your own software publishers is to us what a Clairol Footspar would have been to Sir Ranolf Fiennes during his long trek. But how did he become a MD? "I started the company nine years ago with very little money and lots of enthusiasm," he explains.

So how does Ian spend his average day? "First of all I sort through the faxes and all the post. I try and get the mail answered first of all so that leaves the rest of the day free to do other things. Then I have impromptu meetings with the other Directors, just so I know what's going on. From that point on, the day tends to differ. I can get involved with new products, marketing meetings, outside presentations, all that kind of thing."

Is it a stressful job? "Oh [censored] yes," he says, "I used to have black hair! There is an awful lot of stress because in this industry you set such high standards and work to strict deadlines and no matter how well you see the plan going there's always something that can go wrong. But if I didn't enjoy it then I wouldn't take the pressure - you've got to be able to come to work and enjoy it"



D-DAY

DARE YOU RE-LIVE IT?

5th June, 1944. Evening... The storm clouds of war are gathering over the Channel. Just after midnight Operation Overlord will commence, unleashing the allied forces against the might of the German Army on the beaches of Normandy...



PC

Hone your skills beforehand with up to 28 training missions. Now, as the legendary General Dwight D. Eisenhower, you're ready to lead the offensive...

Liberate the strategically crucial village of St. Mere Eglise. In the hush of the war-room, pore over the war map, plan tactics and issue your commands.

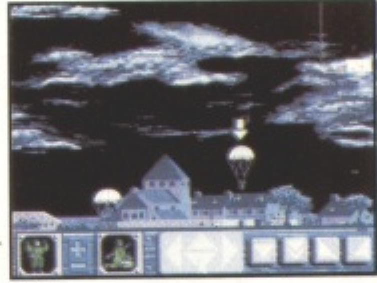


PC

Then it's into the fury of battle as you take to the tracer-lit skies at the controls of a B17 Bomber, softening up your target with a daring pinpoint bombing raid...

With explosions still ringing in your ears, drop the 82nd Airborne into safe locations - remember, their lives hang on your skill...

Now come the big guns. In the sweltering heat of a tank you



ATARI ST

rumble towards the front line...squinting from the gunner's turret you blast away an enemy Panzer and thunder on...

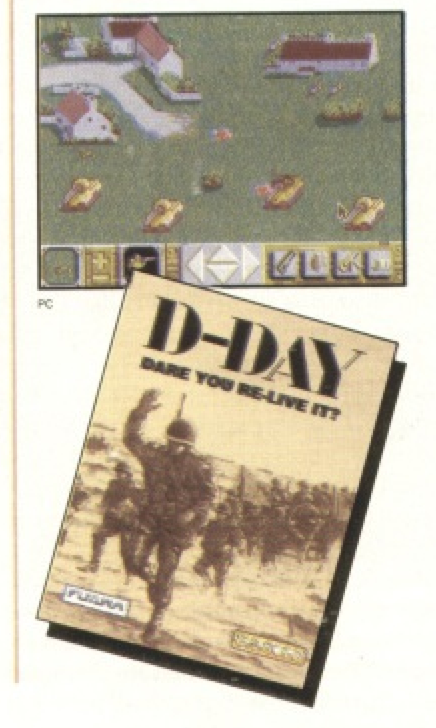


AMIGA

Finally, with bayonets fixed, wave in your infantry to take back the village in treacherous hand - to - hand combat.

Adjust difficulty levels to match your ability... introduce the fog of war to make those strategic decisions ultimately realistic... do whatever you need to for victory.

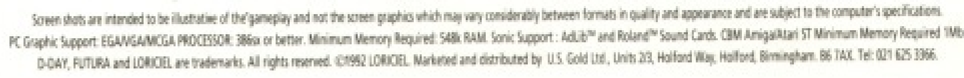
ASK YOUR RETAILER FOR D-DAY NOW!



PC

Available on: PC & Compatibles, CBM Amiga & Atari ST.





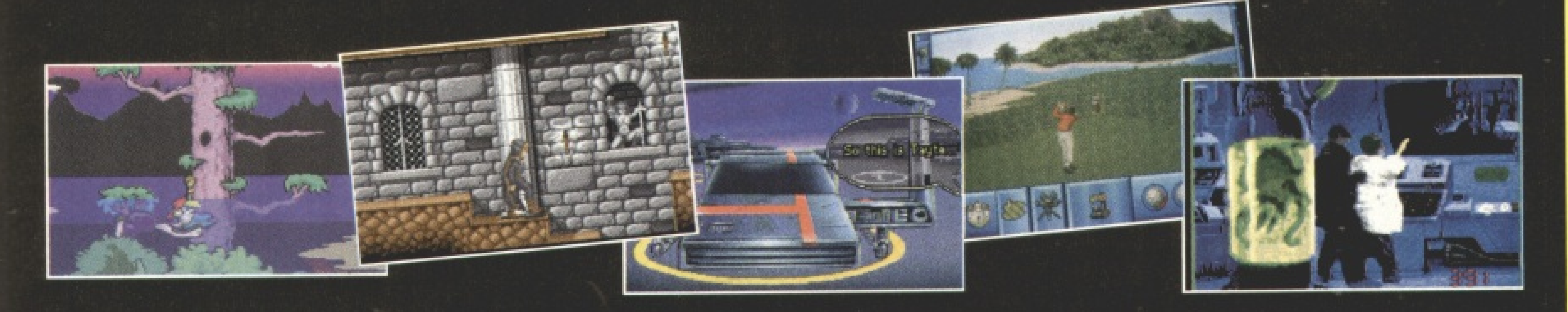
Screen shots are intended to be illustrative of the gameplay and not the screen graphics which may vary considerably between formats in quality and appearance and are subject to the computer's specifications.
PC Graphic Support: EGA/VGA/MCGA PROCESSOR: 386sx or better. Minimum Memory Required: 548k RAM. Sonic Support: AdLib™ and Roland™ Sound Cards. CBM Amiga/Atari ST Minimum Memory Required 1Mb.
 Marketed and distributed by U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3, Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham. B6 7AX. Tel: 021 625 3366.



CAUTION!

WORK IN PROGRESS

Once again it's time to don hard hat and thick gloves as we come to the part of the magazine known as, if you will, 'Work In Progress'. It's dangerous and exciting place, full of strange sights never before seen by mortal man. Many have entered, few have left. Good luck on your journey...



PROJECT: Bubba 'n' Stix
PUBLISHER: Core Design
DEVELOPERS:
Mark Watson, John Kirkland (Programming)
Simon Phipps (Design, background graphics)
Billy Allison (Sprite graphics)
INITIATED: October 1992
RELEASE: July 1993



FANTA-

What's on the end of the stick, Core? A rather tasty-looking platform puzzler is the answer, and David Upchurch is going to tell you all about it...

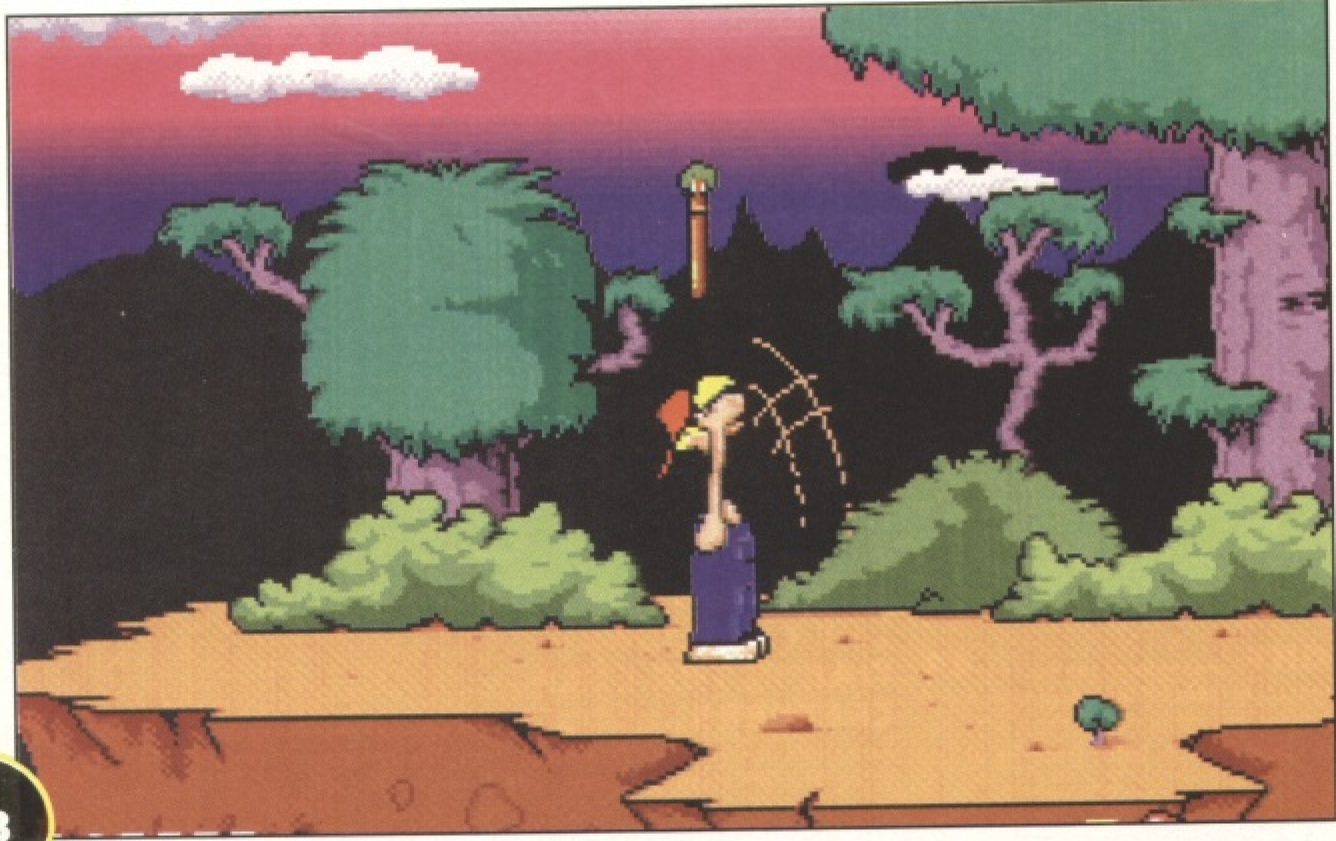
After any computer games show everybody always asks you "See anything good?" Last April's European Computer Trade Show was no different, but the surprising thing was that everybody seemed to agree that one of the show's surprise stars was Core's Bubba 'n' Stix.

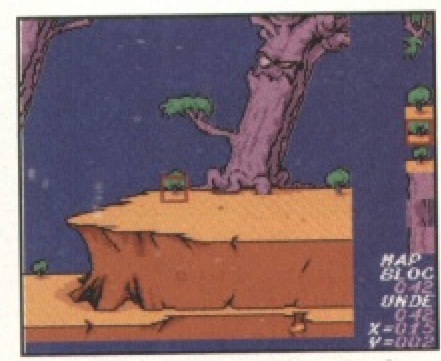


Originally developed under the working title of The Man With The Stick it's undergone a recent name change, partly to avoid any copyright problems with one of the characters from Vic Reeves Big Night Out but mainly because it's doubtful that the The Man With The Stick would mean anything to anyone outside of Great Britain. Besides, Bubba 'n' Stix sounds sweet.

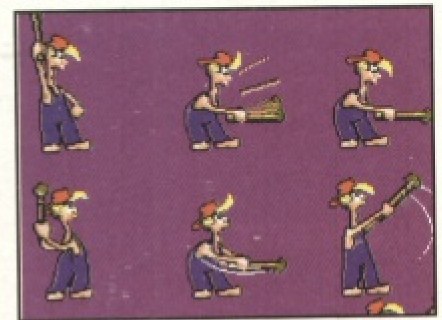
In essence the game is a cutesy platform-based puzzle affair, with a healthy dose of monster-mashing action ladled on top to keep everything moving along. The game's hero is armed with a multi-talented stick with which he has to solve various mind-bending problems in order to reach the end of each bright, cartoon-like level.

But the game you're getting and the game you nearly got are very different as Simon Phipps, the game's designer and background graphic artist, explains: "When I got back from holiday last October Jere-





The custom-written background mapper allows the team to build levels with ease.



Just some of Bubba's 120+ animation frames. Bubba could be the best animated game hero ever!





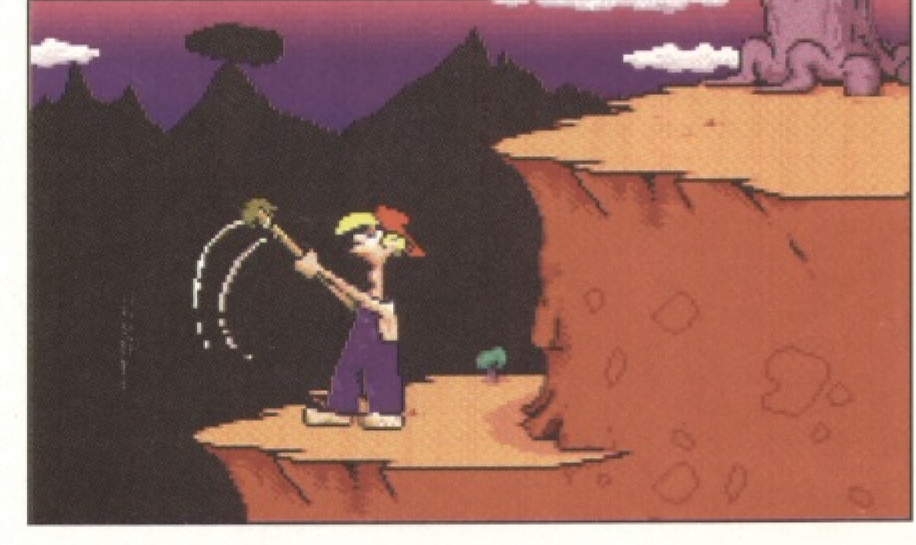
STIX!

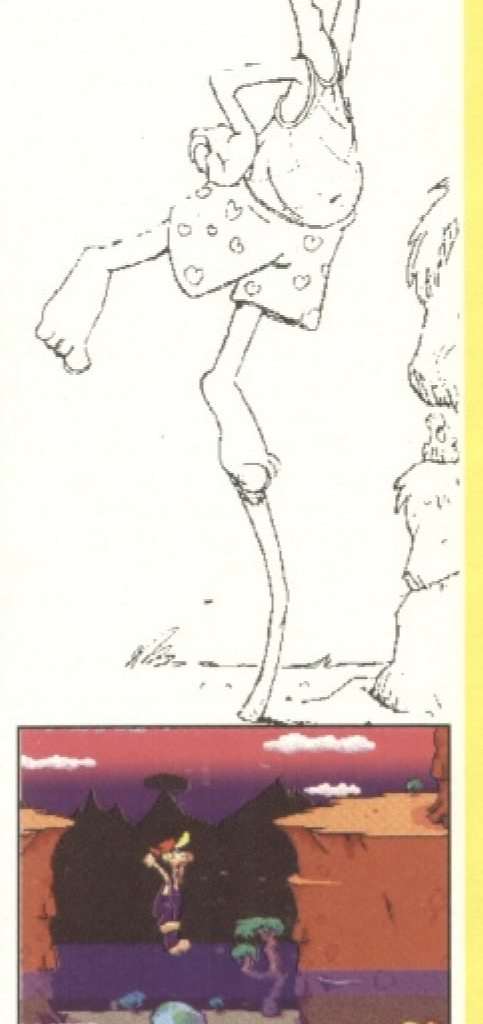
my [Smith, Core's MD] collared me and said 'Right, what I want you to do next is a game about a man with a stick'. I went okay. He told me that this bloke must be able to do loads of things with the stick. I was to make it look all dark and moody and atmospheric and I was to rotoscope the main guy and make it very realistic and get loads of animation into him. And that was about it, really. It was a very open brief!

"So I sat down and started thinking what you could do with a stick. Fairly soon I realised that if the game was going to be realistic then the stick would have to be of a fixed length. So if he could use it for pole-vaulting, say, he couldn't use it as a snorkel for going swimming. It was really limiting. Another thing was I'd just spent two years doing really moody graphics for Amiga and Megadrive versions of Wolfchild and I wasn't desperately keen to do the same sort of thing all over again, because I like to change graphic styles every game.

"So I was banging my head against a brick wall about what I could do with this man with a stick. Anyway, one night me and Billy went back to my house and started brainstorming about the idea. As the night went on we got further and further away from the brief and our ideas got wilder and wilder. We came up for these ideas for what you could do with this stick that were completely unfeasible in the real, physical world. Eventually Jeremy saw the sketches and drawings Bill had done and he loved it. So we then took off on this really madcap sort of route."

Madcap indeed. The game's plot centres around the slightly gormless Bubba, who is kidnapped by aliens to become an exhibit in their intergalactic zoo. By a sequence of events too ridiculous to go into here, the ship crashes on an strange planet. Bubba crawls from the wreckage to come face to face with fellow captive Stix, a small rod-like alien. They soon become firm friends and together they set off to find a way home.





The beauty of giving the stick its own limited intelligence is that it solves many of the thornier logistical problems. "We wanted to have situations like where the hero could poke the stick into holes in the wall and use it as a platform to jump higher," explains Simon. "If we had done the game in a serious way then if he needed the stick again he'd have to go back and fetch it, but in a cartoon the hero can just call it back. It allowed us to get lots of game in there but also get away with doing all these really weird things."

> "We've been spending most of our time on the puzzles because we know we can create a slick action game. Getting the balance of the puzzles right is a tricky thing."
>
> **Simon Phipps, Game Designer.**

Weird is not the word. Bubba can do obvious things with Stix, like us him as a club, but he can also use him as a platform (as explained above), as a boomerang to whack nasties, as a snorkel for swimming underwater, as a lever to prise open lids, as a spoon to stir pots... the list goes on. The amazing thing is all these varied actions are controlled from a simple one-button joystick.

"We're trying to make it really simple to play even though there's this huge range of things you can do," says Simon. "I'm not a big fan of these Streetfighter-y type games where you have to go up, down, left, right before you can perform your move. It's fairly logical if you're pushing up against a manhole cover you're going to use the stick to lever it open. Then it's simply a matter of map design to make sure that the system never gets confused about what you want to."



The problem with a lot of similar 'context sensitive'

games is that the puzzles tend to be either too easy - you just move your hero to the right spot and tap fire - or too hard and obscure - take Gobliiins, for example. It's a problem that Simon is confident they'll avoid: "We've been spending most of our time on the puzzles because we know we can create a slick action game. Getting the balance of the puzzles right is a tricky thing."

With such a complex program it's been 'in at the deep end' time for the game's coder Mark Watson. "It's his first project," explains Simon. "He sent in a beautiful conversion Defender for the ST and we said 'Yup, we'll 'ave 'im!'. One of the things that really impressed us was that rather than having a prerecorded flight path for the ship in the game's attract mode he'd developed this routine that worked out where the aliens were and reacted intelligently to them. He's never written on an Amiga before but he's doing a great job."

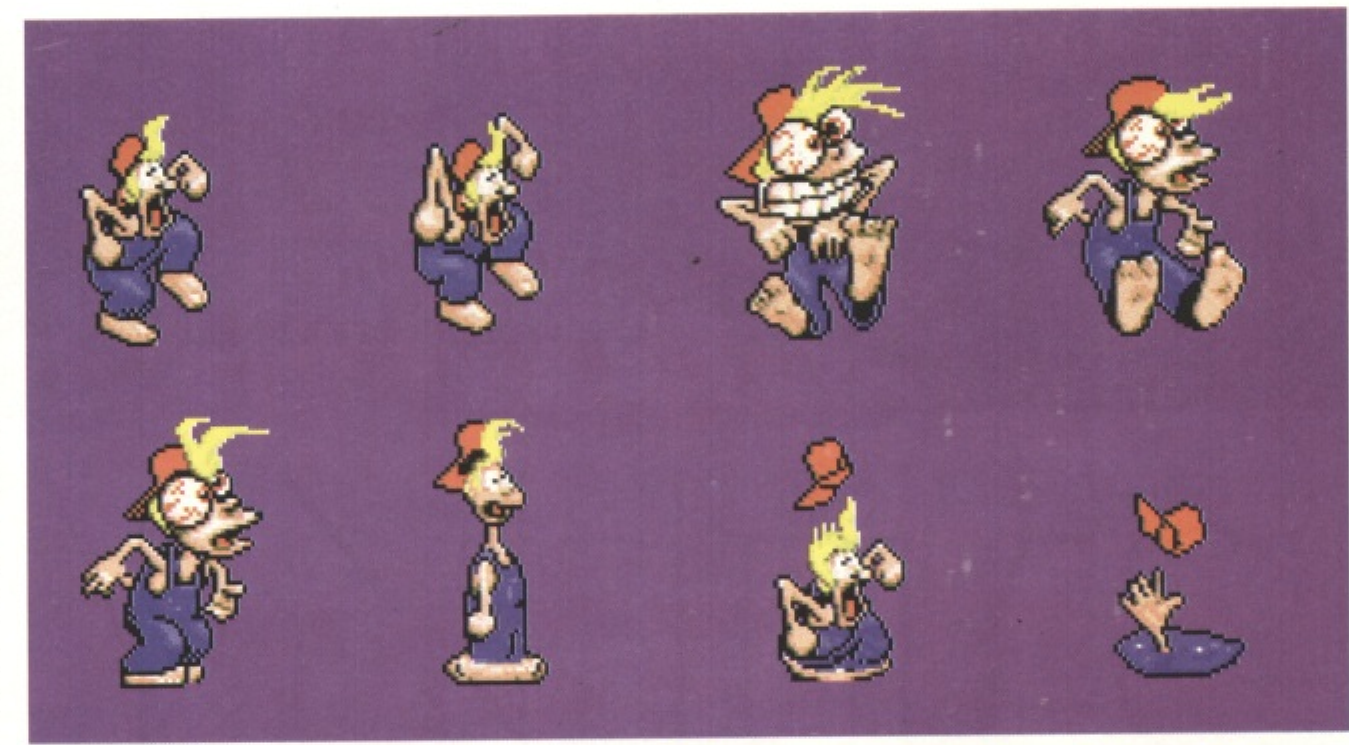
He sure is. It's been said before about many a game but Bubba 'n' Stix really DOES look like a top console game, with its big wonderfully-animated characters, vivid colours, superbly slick parallaxed scrolling and some stunning graphical effects - the underwater rippling has to be seen to be believed. It's a real treat for the eyes. This is largely due to the game's parallel development on both Amiga and Megadrive.

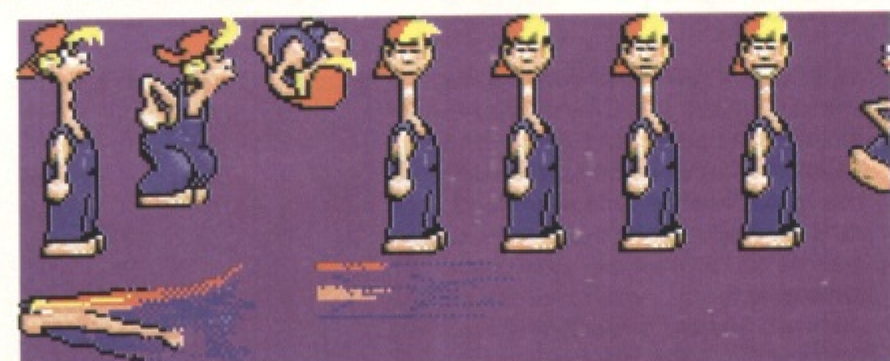
"The basic game logic is being written so that it can be converted from machine to machine without much tweaking. That's been the programmers main challenge," says Simon. "But we're very keen to make sure this isn't seen just as a port. We're going all out to make the Amiga version look as funky as it can do. At the moment the scrolls runs in 50 frames but the aliens update in 25 frames. It's a commonly used cheat so that although the game 'feels' like its running inside a frame it's actually running inside two."

Bubba 'n' Stix is unusual for having two artists working on it. Isn't there a risk that the two artists' styles won't mix? "That was something we were very aware of. From the start we decided the most logical thing to do was to have one of us do the sprites and the other do the backgrounds," explains Simon. "That way, if there is any contrast in style, it won't be between the sprites, which are one game element, and the backgrounds, which are another."

One of the problems Simon is keen to avoid with games that have a lot of animation on the main character is the corresponding decrease in playability. "Take something like Flashback," he says, "When you perform a move you can't do anything until they've completed that move. On the other hand when you have a character with simple animation you have lots of control over them. We're trying to make the game so that it's got loads of animation but you have loads of control as well."

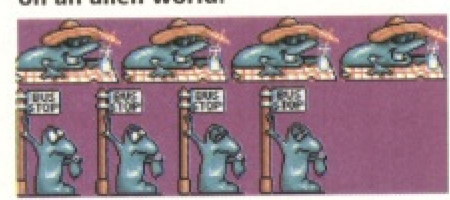
Simon and co. are due to complete Bubba 'n' Stix in about four to six weeks time. He's fairly confident they'll make it. All the game logic is in place and the scrolling/sprite system is up and running. All that's really left to do now is the drawing and design the last three of the game's six levels. In what looks like being a relatively quiet Summer on the Amiga games front, Bubba 'n' Stix stands out like a ray of sunshine on a cloudy day.





(Top) Goodness knows what's happening to Bubba here but it looks very painful!

(Bottom) A spaceship's graveyard on an alien world.







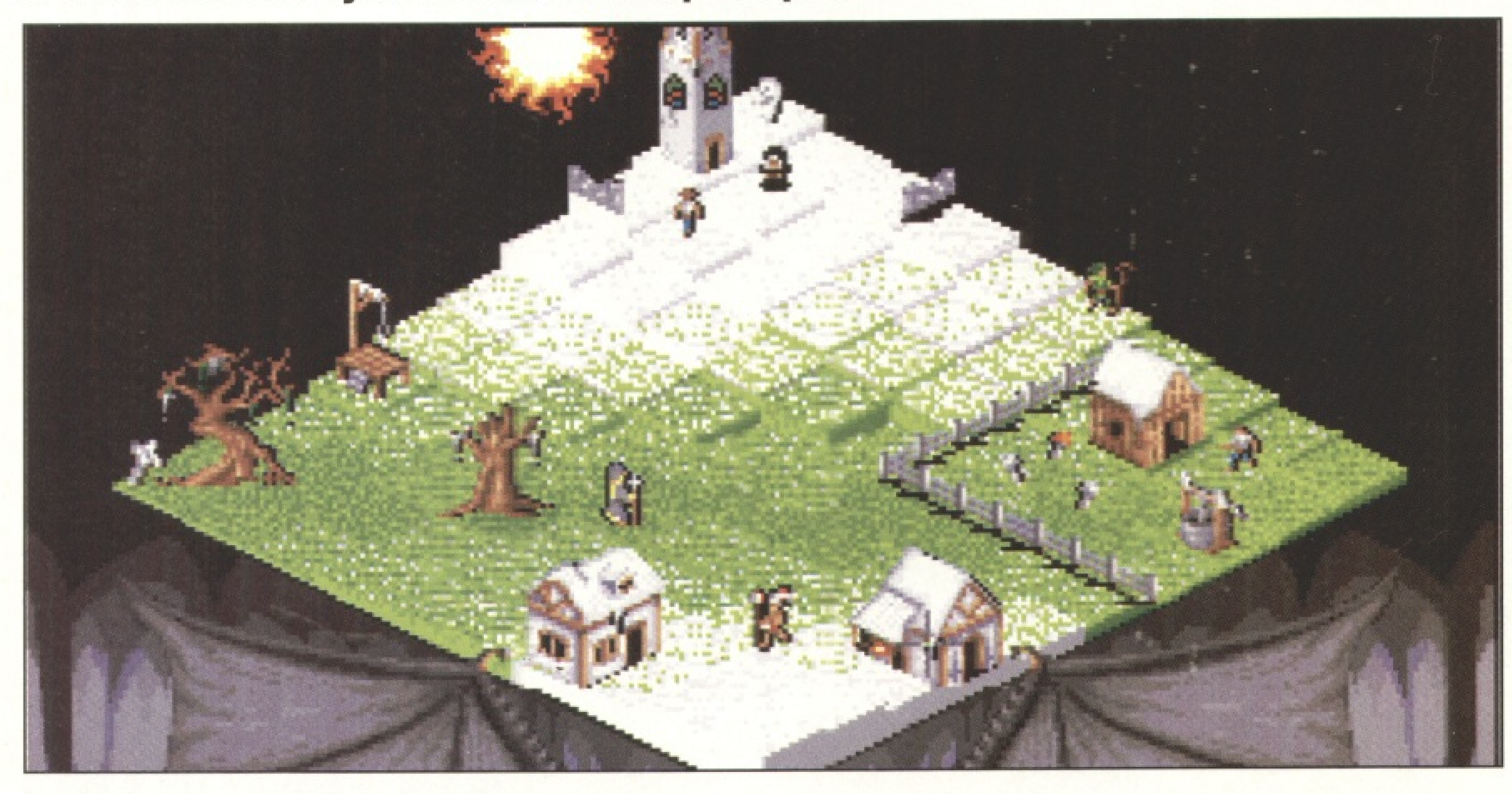
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AND YOUR BEST BUDDY IS AMONG THEM.
SOMETHING BIG AND BAD IS GOING DOWN. IT'S TIME TO ACT.
TAKE TO THE SKIES IN A SUPER SLICK, SUPER CHARGED GUNSHIP AND BRAVE EVERYTHING THE ENEMY CAN THROW AT YOU.
THE BULLETS, FLAK, MISSILES AND ROCKETS FLY THICK AND FAST THROUGH THE FIVE FULL-ON LEVELS OF TOP BLASTING ACTION. ARE YOU COOL ENOUGH TO RISK YOUR NECK TO SAVE THE INJURED POW'S?
BOOST THE CHOPPER'S FEARSOME FIREPOWER WITH ROCKETS, HEAT-SEEKING MISSILES AND FIREBOMBS.
USE THE HOT HARDWARE TO DESTROY EVERYTHING: ENEMY OUTPOSTS, VEHICLES, CANNONS, CHOPPERS, SOLDIERS.... EVEN THE POW'S!
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Virgin
GAMES

PROJECT: Realms of Darkness
PUBLISHER: Grandslam
DEVELOPER: Mystical FX
J.P. Bankes-Mercer (Project manager)
Trevor Brown (Programming)
Shad. Dale (Graphics)
INITIATED: April 1992
RELEASE: August 1993



A GAME FOR ALL SEASONS

Not much has been said about Realms of Darkness up until now so it comes as a surprise to find out that it's actually shaping up to be one of the hottest RPGs this side of the sun. Simon Byron has an on-the-spot report.

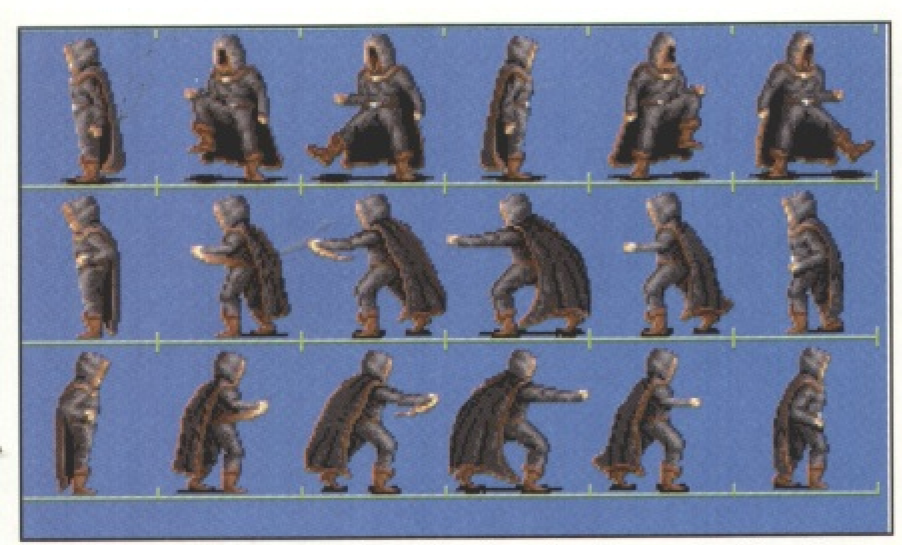


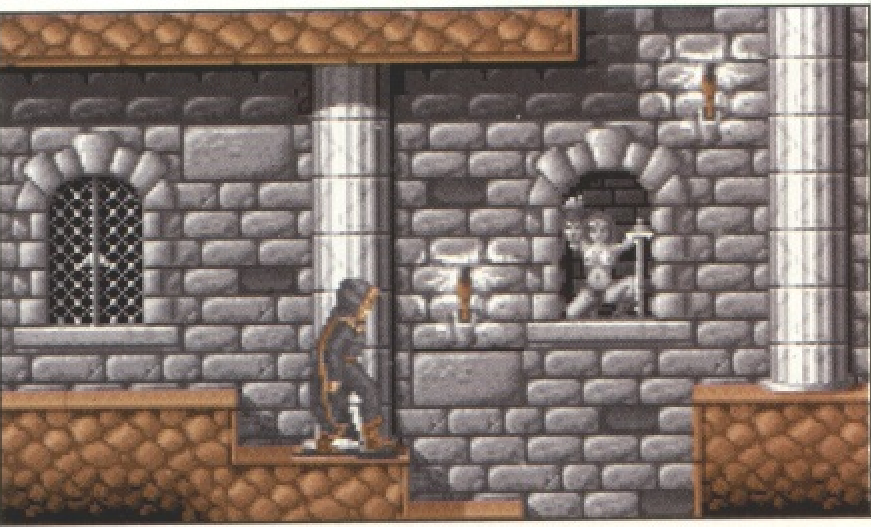
It seems as if every major software house is committed to advancing the RPG genre. The much talked about Ambermoon has its revolutionary texture mapping, Darkmere promises to bring truly cinematic adventuring just once step closer and Liberation (Captive 2) looks pretty snazzy as well. But the one which sounds as if it will make the aforementioned games appear to be nothing more than text adventures is Realms Of Darkness from Grandslam.

On the surface the game looks like Millennium's Robin Hood or Rome. But appearances can be deceiving - there's a lot more to Realms Of Darkness than those two games put together. Mystical FX's J.P. Banks-Mercer (or just JP to his mates) is the Project Manager and he's confident that we'll all be more than impressed with the finished game and, while we're usually slightly skeptical of folk who make such claims, it looks like he could have something concrete to back it all up. And what's more surprising is that this is the first game he's been responsible for!

The plot is fairly standard for this type of game and I won't waste your time by going into it too deeply as there are far more interesting things to be discussing. Like what makes Realms Of Darkness so different, eh? Over to JP. "For starters, we've got an outside map which you can walk around and you can visit citadels, villages and so on. If you cross certain entry points, for example an entrance to a city, then the view cuts to a much larger isometric map depicting everything at much greater detail and you can explore the surroundings and fight any hostile creatures. Then, if you decide to enter a building, the screen changes to show the action from side-on and you'll be able to move around and fight things that way. Basically, we've got the best of three worlds."

Sounds good. But aren't RPGs known for not having much character and only appealing to hardened adventurers? "Not this one, no. Humour sells games these days and that's one part of Realms that we haven't overlooked. Take the monsters, for example. Most RPGs have


Just like any other game, Realms Of Darkness has the usual sprite animation screens but this time the programmers have to create three sets of graphics, one for each perspective it requires.


The side-on view may look like your standard scrolling beat-'em-up but you couldn't be further from the truth. This section of the game will require as much brains as brawn if you are to stay alive.

boring creatures - skeletons or zombies, you know the kind of thing. We've gone for original creatures like the Cyclops slug - they're all weird but incredibly funny with it."

And he's right. There are loads of characters in the game and most have their own little traits that help to give them real personalities. "Take this lady here," JP says as a new image appears on-screen, "whenever she laughs her knackers juggle up and down!" Hmm, quite.

So who are these other people wondering around Realms's land? "They are all individuals, some of whom will go out of their way to hassle you. If you've got an object to find to complete a quest then they will seek out that particular item and do their best to prevent you from getting it.

"Every character has their own separate command list. Someone will start off on the other side of the world and attempt to do a certain task which will thwart your mission. They'll also swap objects with each other so you're never sure who's got what at any given time, which makes the game even harder. It was incredibly hard to write."

At this point JP calls up some of the interior locations for me to see. I couldn't help but notice another particular dodgy semi-naked woman carved into the wall. "That's disgusting," I utter. "I know," he replies, "but you should have seen what the artist wanted to do."

Another gory image appears, this time of three blokes who have been hung from an old oak tree, their limp bodies swinging in the breeze. Isn't all this a bit horrible? "No, not really. Because we're using hardware sprites for blood on any of the characters, you'll be able to switch the gore off, like in Moonstone."

Realism is another thing the team are striving for. The game will have an auto-mapping facility which will highlight any places you've visited as you travel through them. But stay away from a particular area for too long and the highlight will be removed, as if your character has forgotten about where he's been.

Graphically, you'll find nothing as detailed. "The landscape will contain loads of animations. Sharks will be swimming in the sea, smoke will rise from chimneys... everything that you'd find in the real world, basically. Then there's the weather system. As you play, the game will reflect the seasonal changes so you'll get snow settling in winter and so on. If it's snowing, the landscape will rise up slightly and if your character walks through the snow then he'll clear some of it away.

> **"We wanted it to be fast and furious so that there's more to do than just solve puzzles."**
> J.P., Project Manager

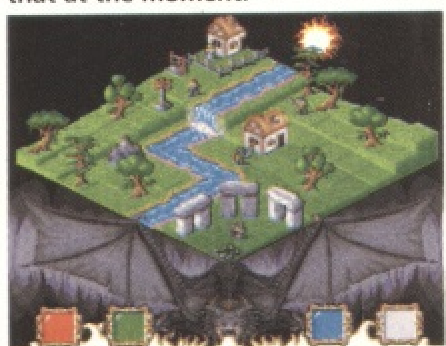
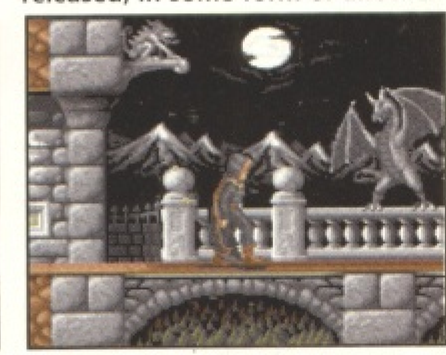
"Because of the tile system we're using to build up the landscape we've been able to give each 'tile' its own intelligence so that if one is altered in any way (for example someone trudging through the snow) then all the other tiles around it will change slightly as well. If something gets struck by lightening then a big hole will appear and everything around it will be altered too. it looks really good - and it should do, we've spent a lot of time getting the visuals just right."

Doesn't Realms of Darkness look like Darkmere? "Darkmere's really slow. They don't appear to have put a lot into the game and it all seems a little too linear for my liking. You have to follow a set path to complete the missions but in our game everything exists at once, that's something I've forgotten to tell you. If you're off killing a dragon, say, another dragon in another part of the world can have a baby which will grow into a powerful creature. If someone kills another person who's got a certain object, he'll be buried and you'll have to find someone to dig him up. In fact anyone can die in the game, even key characters who possess vital information. If one of those pops his clogs then you'll need to find a necromancer to resurrect him. The game is always moving and constantly updating."

What about an A1200 version? "We're talking to Grandslam about doing an enhanced version. We'd like to because the A1200 is an amazing machine, we'll have to take a look at what the market's like. We've developed a pretty nifty anti-pirate device which should ensure that hacking the game will be more trouble than it's worth but obviously I can't say too much about that at the moment."

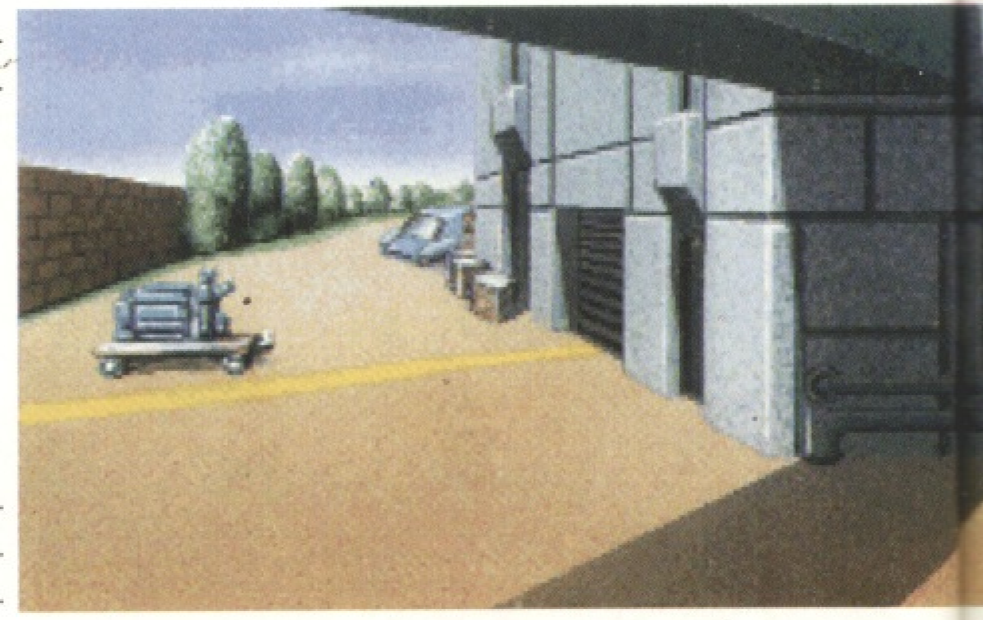
Does JP think that the inclusion of the more arcade-y section will offend traditional RPGers? "We originally set out to do a huge RPG game with a large arcade aspect. We wanted it to be fast and furious so that there's more to do than just solve puzzles. It's up to you the way you want to play it - you can build your character up to be a superb fighter or a powerful magician. This way we think everyone will be able to get maximum enjoyment."

It has to be said that Realms of Darkness is likely to blow anyone's socks off - even if you're wearing one of those tight-fitting verucca bandages. Rest assured that you'll be seeing this game featured in these pages once again before it is released, in some form or another.



Who would have thought these two screenshots came from the same game? J.P and his programmers, that's who, and they are hoping that this combination of views will help to make Realms of Darkness a bit of a classic.


Most gamers would be pleased if this was the main part of the game but Realms Of Darkness promises a whole lot more besides.

PROJECT: Innocent - Until Caught
PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
DEVELOPERS:
Divide By Zero
Andy Blazdell (Design, Programming)
Simon Lipowicz (Design, Programming)
Stuart Hughes (Background paintings)
Gary Welch (Character close-up paintings)
Jack Wilkes (Character animations)
Tahir Rashid (Background animations)
Alexander Martin (Graphic conversion)
INITIATED: Spring 1992
RELEASE: Autumn 1993



THE INN

What would you do if the taxman gave you a bill that had more zeros in it than a train-spotters convention? That's just your first problem in Psygnosis's forthcoming Monkey Island 2 beater. David Upchurch reports.

It's Jack T. Ladd's worst nightmare come true. A thief since the day he was born (he even used to nick the other kids' milk at school, the swine) he's finally been caught. Not by the police - that'd be nothing in comparison - but by the dreaded taxmen. And not just any taxmen, either. This is the distant future, and the inland revenue service has grown from a small band of besuited pen-pushers into a mighty force spanning the galaxy, equipped with its own massive fleet of warships crewed by hundreds of crack tax collectors.

Jack is given an ultimatum: Find the money to pay for all the tax owed on his illegally-gotten goods within twenty-eight days or face - gulp! - annihilation. And they mean it, too; this lot have been known to decimate whole planets just because of an incorrectly filled-out tax returns form. This tragedy is just the start of a whole series of outlandish and hilarious events that befall Jack in Innocent - Until Caught, the first graphic adventure from arcade maestros Psygnosis.

The programming is being handled by Andy Blazdell and Simon Lipowicz, known to their mates as Divide By Zero. Being just a short cab ride away from their less-than-plush HQ in North London, I figured it was about time I popped around and found out how the duo intend to topple LucasArts from the top of the graphic adventure tree...

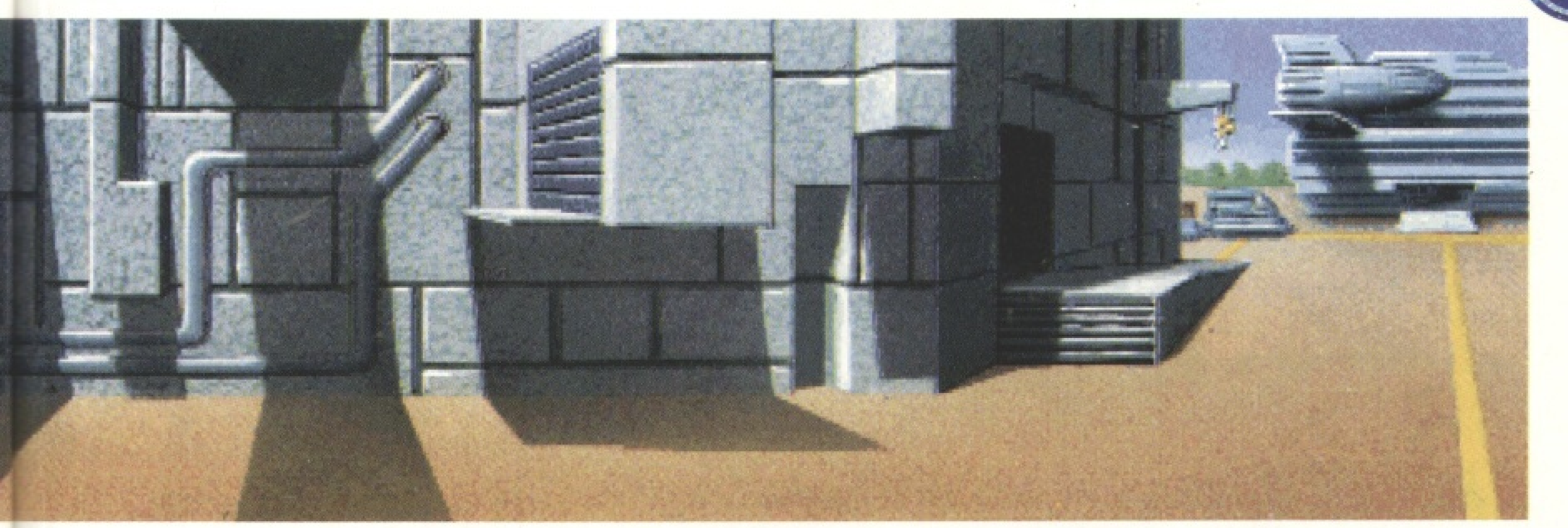
"Basically what we've got is our own language called Interspective that we used to write the game," says Andy. "So I write in that language, and that was written by Simon. We've been working on Innocent for a year now but before that we spent a year developing the Interspective system. Basically it runs any game that involves moving a pointer around the screen and clicking on the screen.

"Originally we writing a game for Mirrorsoft just before they went under, based around the FIST licence using Interspective, but with a first-person perspective rather than having somebody walking about on-screen. We just had to change the language slightly to allow you to









IOCENT PARTY



have characters walking about and that's when Innocent was born.

"Interspective was originally written on the Atari ST and we actually had a fully-working version running on the ST. But we realised pretty soon that the ST couldn't handle the sort of games that we wanted to do, mainly because of the lack of colours. Thirty-two colours is the absolute minimum you can get away with. We're thinking of doing an A1200 version but that's been put on ice for the time being until we see what sort of sales we get."

The game uses a player interface that will be fairly familiar to anyone who has played a graphic adventure before. There are icons to examine, pick up, use, talk, move ... and scan. This latter icon is rather unusual but helpful. Once selected it allows the player to scan his mouse pointer around the screen - any objects that can be interacted with then appear in the small window to the bottom-left of the screen. In addition, any possible actions that can be performed on the object are highlighted in the icon panel. As you look around Jack's head swivels to follow the pointer's progress. Nice.

"In our game you have total freedom to do what you want and go where you like. The other characters lead their own lives. In the LucasArts' games a lot of the events are location driven whereas ours are character driven."

Andy Blazdell, Innocent - Until Caught's designer/programmer.

And the innovations don't stop there either. When not in scan mode the aforementioned small window shows you a diagrammatic view of the current location with any exits indicated by arrows. (assuming you've discovered them, of course). By clicking on an exit arrow you make Jack walk to it on-screen, which comes in particularly handy for getting from end of a long scrolly location to the other.

The conversation system is neat, too. At first glance it looks like all the rest, with Jack having a variety of 'replies' to choose from. However, moving the pointer over the speech bubble of the character being spoken to will highlight key phrases and by clicking on them you can call up further questions regarding that topic. It's all very clever.

All the while Andy and Simon are showing me aspects of the game they allude and refer to

"We tried to keep it like a movie. You've got elements of a buddy-buddy movie, you've got the plot twisting and turning and doing loop the loops, there's romance in there..."

Andy Blazdell, Innocent - Until Caught's designer/programmer.



scenes from famous films. "We tried to keep it like a movie," admits Andy. "You've got elements of a buddy-buddy movie, you've got the plot twisting and turning and doing loop the loops, there's romance in there and there's a soundtrack that flows all the way through it too."

In fact, the musical soundtrack promises to be one of the game's many highlights. "We didn't like iMuse," says Andy. "Although it was atmospheric to a certain extent you couldn't actually sit and listen to it. And lot of games you load up just because of the music. You can't do that with LucasArts' games because the music's quite dull really. A lot of it's too atmospheric and it only works if you're playing the game. You couldn't make a soundtrack album out of it that you'd actually want to listen to by itself.

"We took the basic premise of the music changing as you go along but having proper soundtrack 'themes' written by Matt Furniss. So if you're in a certain location you have a specific theme then if a character walks in and does something then you have their theme introduced. You'll be able to recognise which character is coming in by their theme. It sounds a lot better than iMuse." And it should work properly on the Amiga, too, simply due to the way the Interspective system has been designed, something which iMuse never did.

Although the game is still some three months or so from completion, Psygnosis is obviously chuffed with the work so far: "We've already signed up Innocent 2. Psygnosis are more technically-led than most software houses and I think they appreciated that our system is very flexible and technically - we don't want to blow our own trumpet but we will - it knocks the pants off any other system of its type, purely of what we can do and they can't.





"If you look at LucasArts' stuff the games are very linear and there are technical reasons why they're like that. Because they playtest them so much they've made it look seamless but they can't do a lot of the stuff we can. In our game you have freedom to do what you want and go where you want. The other characters lead their own lives. In the LucasArts' games a lot of the events are location driven whereas ours are character driven."



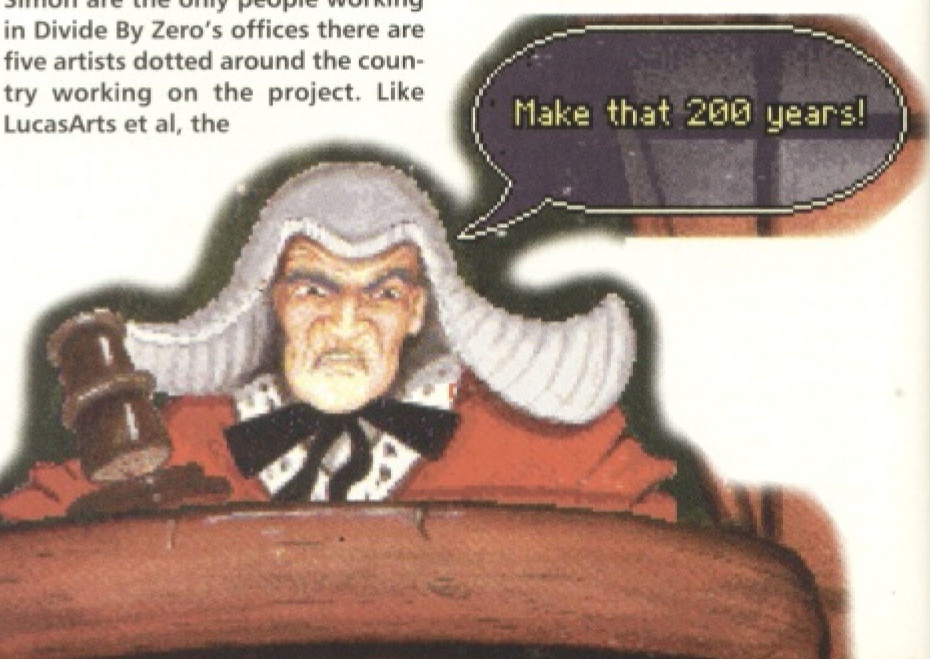
One of the most impressive things about Innocent - Until Caught is the sheer size of the team involved in it. Although Andy and Simon are the only people working in Divide By Zero's offices there are five artists dotted around the country working on the project. Like LucasArts et al, the background graphics were first sketched and painted, then digitised and imported onto the computer, with each artist specialising is a different graphical area.

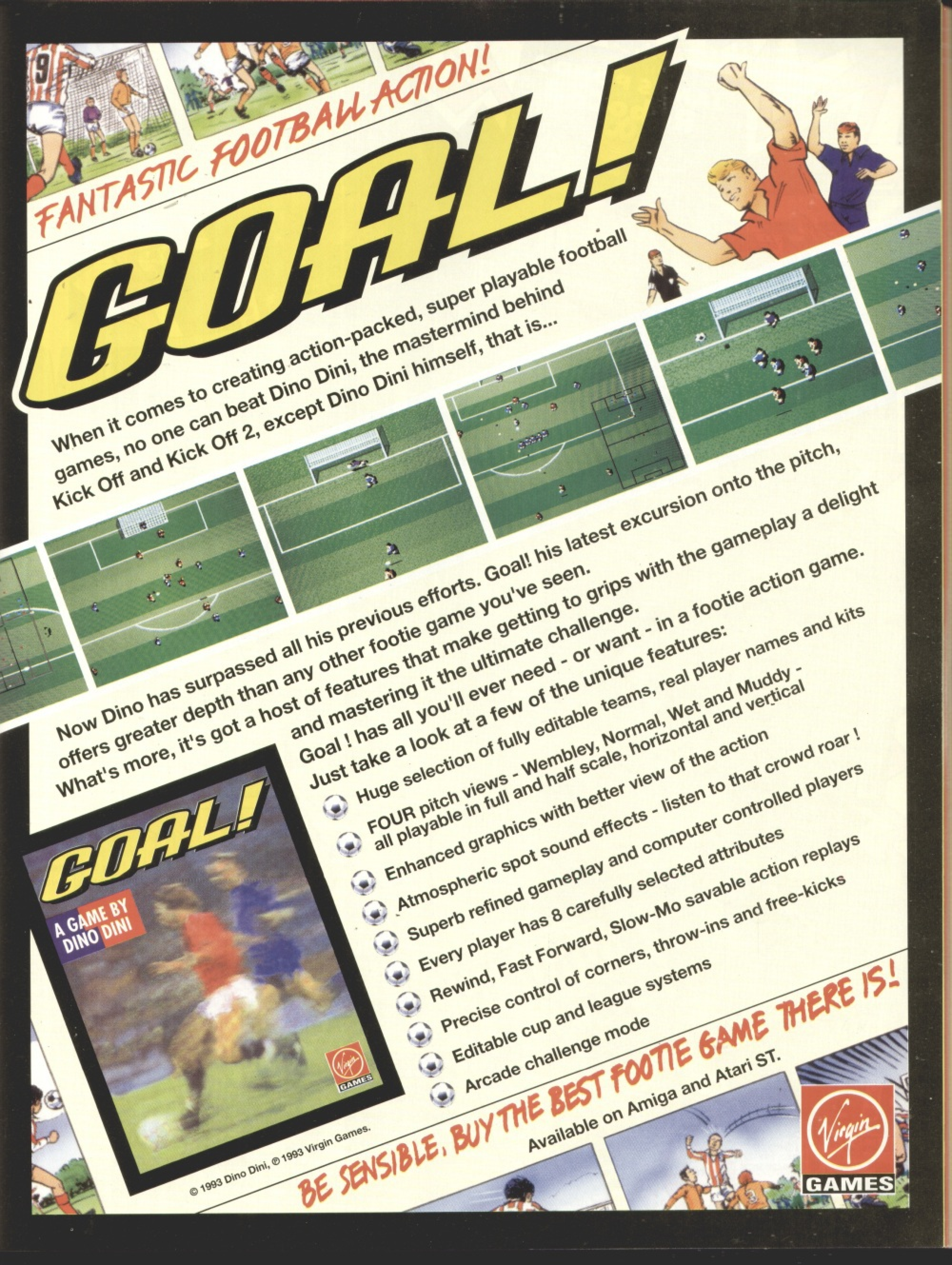
"We deliberately kept the artists doing separate aspects of the game," says Andy, "otherwise you end up with discrepancies in style. You find that a lot in other games. Likewise all the background animations have been drawn as though they were digitised, so they don't look out of place."

Psygnosis is obviously hoping for something of an international hit with Innocent - Until Caught. But as well as the usual French, German, Italian, etc translations there will even be a version in 'American', where words such as 'girly' will be substituted for 'babe'. This is hardly surprising as the Americans seem to buy graphic adventures as if they're going out of fashion. One wonders how the Americans will take to the humour in the game, though, as it's very 'British' and laced with large dollops of sarcasm and heavy irony. Mind you, as nearly every American you meet seems to tell you, they "lurve Mont-ee Piethorn" so perhaps this won't be much of a problem.

The game is being primarily developed for the PC, but the Amiga version should look and feel little different. Obviously the graphics will have to be downgraded slightly but apart from that the two should be nigh-on identical. Again, this is another highly-positive by-product of the Interspective system.

Obviously Andy and Simon have big plans for future projects using their Interspective system. "We've got designs in the pipeline but we can't say much about them yet, especially as even Psygnosis haven't seen them!" laughs Andy. Fair enough. Looks like we'll have to be satisfied with having Innocent - Until Caught to look forward to. And looking forward to it I am...




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PROJECT: Int'l Open Golf Championship
PUBLISHER: Ocean
DEVELOPER: Martin Lyons (Programming)
Dave Harrison (Programming)
Tony Meredith (Graphis)
Ron Oulton (Additional Programming)
Mike Anderton (Sound)
INITIATED: MAY 1992
RELEASE: JUNE 1993

A ROUND WITH OCEAN

Ocean offer you the chance to trample all over some simulated greens once again. Simon Byron wonders if we need another one.

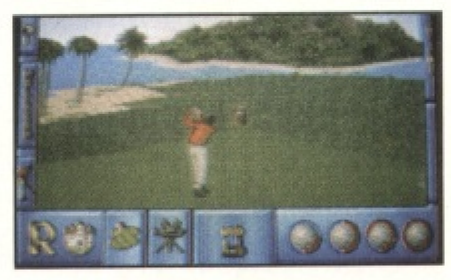
Us journos always have a little difficulty with a product like this. There have been loads of excellent golf games released for the Amiga, particularly in the past couple of years, from the realism of MicroProse Golf to the beauty of Links, taking in the extremely difficult Nick Faldo's along the way. So, when a software house tells you that they've got one coming, and it's the best thing ever, you can't help but wonder how much is innovation and how much is pure bandwagon jumping.

In this case, however, the emphasis is definitely on the former. Why do another golf game? "The only answer to that is to actually see it running. There's no other golf game that has movement like ours. It started purely as a 3D engine for the PC", begins programming supremo David Harrison. "We didn't have any plans to use it in a golf game. We just came up with this system, and then tried to find an application to use it in! We wanted to find one that wouldn't get in the way of everyone else, which at the time was Golf. However, as we were developing ours, more and more Golf games were coming out, which was a bit of a problem, but in the end we think we've got the superior product."

"I think the market can take as many games as can be made, as long as there's quality and the games are playable,"
David Harrison, Graphic Artist

Visually, it does look superb, it has to be said. The course is drawn using a fractal polygon system and displayed in glorious 3D, similar in style to MicroProse's effort, only much more detailed. On the PC, you have full garaud shading, but the A1200 will just have to make do with 256 colours and texture shading. (The previous sentence must be read with your tongue placed firmly in your cheek. The game looks a treat!). For those A500 owners out there, don't feel too left out as the cut down version released slightly later will still feature the same texture fills, but will only use 32 colours. That will be the only real difference between the two.







A lot of thought is being given to the controls, making them as realistic as possible without making them too complicated. "Our game is as simple to play as PGA Golf while maintaining the realism of something like Links. We've been very clever with the way we control the actual shot on the ball. In real golf, you have a full swing - professional golfers can use three-quarter, half and quarter swings, and then use the clubs to vary the range that swing will reach. We've used that method and given you a sight, which the ball moves behind in a fairly random manner. If you hit the ball dead on centre, the ball will fly straight, with left and right giving you hook and slice. If you hit it below centre, you'll chip the shot and if you hit it above centre you'll top the shot and punch it. It gives you full control over your shot." Sounds groovy!

But the big question is, does the market need another golf game? "I think the market can take as many games as can be made, as long as there's quality and the games are playable."

PROJECT: Maelstrom
PUBLISHER: Empire
DEVELOPER: Mark Vange (Director)
Andy Blau (Writer)
Anselm Hook, Glenn Wilson (Programmers)
Jerrmiah O'Flahtery, Ian Maw (Graphics)
Kevin Stratton (Sound)
INITIATED: Early 1991
RELEASE: June 1993



Much of the game will be spent mining the land for essential materials which can then be used to build weapons or sold for a huge profit.



Here's one of the many colourful animated sequences showing some bloke being kidnapped by assassins, as seen on a security camera.

KICKIN' UP A STORM

Sid 'Bladerunner' Mead conceived the original idea for a stunning new game-form a few years back and, after a lot of blood, sweat and tears, the Californian programmers are almost ready to put their feet up. Simon Byron is suitably impressed.

Here's a new buzzword for you. Cellular Automata. Sounds quite good doesn't it? You can bet your life that 'ver kids' will be saying that down the Milk Bars or wherever they go nowadays in a few years to come but the people who pioneered this term are the programmers behind Maelstrom, Empire's innovative new 'game'. Game is in inverted commas there because you can't categorise Maelstrom like you can other games. It certainly doesn't belong to the shoot-'em-up genre, nor role playing or adventure. So what the hell is it?

Over to Mark Vange, Maelstrom's Director (or, as he puts it, Whip Cracker and Cleaning Lady), for a quick explanation: "It's a simulation of ruling a planet in a galaxy which is in turmoil. The neat thing about it is that it's not a reactive simulation in the sense that you do something and something else happens as a direct consequence, there are lots of independent storylines which are running concurrently.

"Each of the thirty or forty planets has its own government and its people are all trying to achieve something. These plots are rolling along all the time and even they interact with each other, so whatever you do will alter the way the game is going in a significant but not necessarily immediately noticeable way."

This, then, is Cellular Automata working at its best. A bold step forward in gaming terms, and certainly something which hasn't really been seen before (apart from the slightly more basic Virtual Theatre unveiled for the first time in Lure of the Temptress). Surely something as revolutionary as this must have taken ages to implement? "The game has been in development for over two and a half years and the majority of the early stages were spent perfecting this storyline system. It was a real headache to work out how to do it at first but I think the system we've come up with is unique and well worth all the hard work."

In the game your Amiga acts as a holo-desk, the kind of thing that the folk in Maelstrom's world use to find out what's going on in other areas of the planet or galaxy. An impressive by-product of this system is the stunning animation sequences which are used to give a visual representation of key areas in the story.

Mark makes no bones about the difficulties floppy owners will experience with these animations but he feels the option to turn them off will more than placate gamers once they've seen the clips several times. "If you're running Maelstrom of floppy then there will be quite a lot of disk swapping," he admits. "We're hoping to cram all the animations [there are over ten minutes worth, all accompanied with sound effects] onto six floppies. We predict that it will take between twenty and forty hours to complete the game if you work out how to do it and reckon that a lot of players will soon tire of the animations after they've been impressed by them a number of times. The game is so involving that you don't lose anything by switching the anims off."

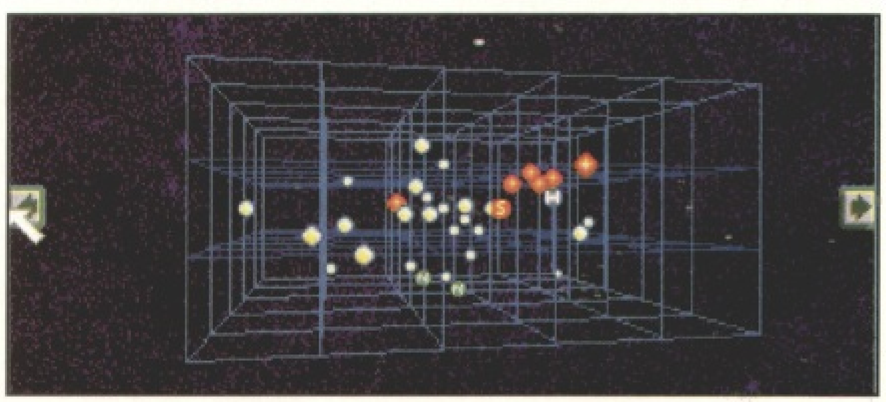
The PC version will be the first to hit the streets and presumably it contains far more colours and the like, right? Wrong, as Mark explains. "In fact, all the animations were developed on the Amiga, using DPaint IV. Sullivan-Bluth [who have produced feature-length animated films such as Rock-a-doodle! and The Land Before Time] drew all the backgrounds for us, using professional cartooning techniques, which were then digitised and the animations drawn over them on the computer.

"All these sequences are 'proper' animations in the sense that everything moves exactly how it would in real life - you don't get the situation where legs or arms bend on their own to give the impression of movement. In Maelstrom the whole body moves as it should."

You'll be able to see the fruits of Mark and his mates' efforts soon (sometime around mid-July, they reckon) so what have the team got lined up for the immediate future? A holiday? "No, I should be so lucky," laughs Mark. "We're converting Maelstrom to a number of different languages. Chinese has been a bit of a problem - we've discovered that our screen resolution isn't enough to contain their fonts and with over five and a half hours of dialogue, it's going to take a long, long time to translate."

Well, you'll really be needing a holiday after that. "No way, we've already started thinking about Maelstrom 2!" he proclaims.

We're still none the wiser as to what word could be used to define Maelstrom, but when the end result looks set to be a truly ground-breaking game, who cares?



SECOND SAMURAI

Psygnosis

Mev Dinc, the man behind Second Samurai, has been working on this follow-up to the brilliant but ill-fated First Samurai (obviously) for over a year and a half but, in his own immortal words, he's taken his time because he "didn't want to rush out a quick sequel". We don't mind how long we have to wait as long as there's a mind-blowing game at the end of it (Frontier, anyone?) and from what Mev's currently showing at the moment, five years' thumb twiddling would be worth it.

The major difference between Second Samurai and the first hack-'n-slash-'em-up is the inclusion of a nifty two-player mode. Two martial arts geezers appear on-screen at the same time, both pursuing the same ideal, i.e. to kill as many assailants as possible before defeating the demon who escaped at the end of the first game (indeed, Second Samurai kicks off with the end of game sequence from the First Samurai). But whereas most two-player games allow some form of co-operation between the two heroes, this time you've three two-player modes, two of which allow you to either stun or kill your chum!



The game is much more linear than its prequel so you won't be wondering around for ages not knowing what to do. There are also some awesome set pieces thrown in for good measure - in one of the levels the hero dons a jet pack and journeys across a rapidly horizontally scrolling landscape in a mini shoot-'em-up kind of way.

Second Samurai will be Vivid Image's last A500 compatible game because Mev thinks they've pushed the machine as far as is humanly possible. In fact, he's deliberately making Second Samurai incompatible with the A1200 as a specially enhanced version will appear roughly a month after the standard game has hit the shelves in October.



THE CARTOONS

Loriciel

Super Angel and Toons are the latest cutesy twosome to announce their imminent arrival on the Amiga scene in Loriciel's gorgeous-looking platform adventure. From what we can gather from the wildly unintelligible press release, Cartoons sounds an awful lot like a certain other game we'd care not to mention. See if you can guess what it is.



The majority of the game centres around guiding a hapless young matey (in this case, Lee, sorry, Toons) through a number of increasingly tough levels. You don't directly control Toons, though, as he's quite capable of making his way through the trap-infested worlds on his own. No, you play the part of Toons's cousin, a strapping figure who travels under the catchy name of Super Angel and it's your job to make sure that his not-so-super relative stays firmly out of trouble and well away from any of the harmful enemies.

We were going to set a 'Guess the Similarities' compo but you'd need an A4 pad (ruled feint and margin) just to mention the obvious resemblances between The Cartoons and Sleepwalker. That said, however, Ocean's charidee game was a bit on the repetitive side so there's room for improvement in that area. The introduction of a number of different weapons in Loriciel's game should go some way to rectify this, as will the shops (where you can purchase all manner of handy items) and cleverly hidden bonus stages which appear where you'd least expect them.

To be honest with you, we haven't seen much of The Cartoons moving so it's hard to comment of how well it plays. That said, though, the French have a habit of coming up with weird games so it should prove an experience if nothing else.





WAR IN THE GULF

Empire

At least Desert Strike had a subtle name. Empire's next release is set, as you'd imagine from its rather brash title, in northern Kuwait against a backdrop of hundreds of burning oil wells set alight by that Saddam fellow. If he had any royalties from just a small percentage of the games he's inspired he'd be earning a fortune, I can tell you. Perhaps that's why he did it. Maybe we should all invade an inferior neighbour and rake it in. 'Scuse me a minute while I assault the rest of the magazines on our floor.

Until you begin to see games entitled 'Carnage at EMAP Towers' or 'Invasion of London' (which shouldn't take long, judging by the short space of time it takes the computer industry to cash in on events like these), you'll have to be content with this tank simulation, a program which utilises the same technology found in Pacific Islands (i.e. using the pioneering Four-Tank-O'-Vision, or whatever it's called).

What's slightly different about War In The Gulf is that it's set a few years after the US have withdrawn from the territory. Commanding a crack unit of mercenary 'tankers', you need to repel the re-invading Iraqis for as long as reinforcements take to arrive. There are fifteen such battles to be won before you can finally call it a day and go home. All the missions need to be completed in order and you'll be able to visit authentic locations along the way such as Failaka Islands and the Khawr-as-Subiyah waterway, where ever they may be.

Empire are promising furious action all the way and we believe them, we really do. You'll have the opportunity to judge for yourselves when War In The Gulf is released during the next month.



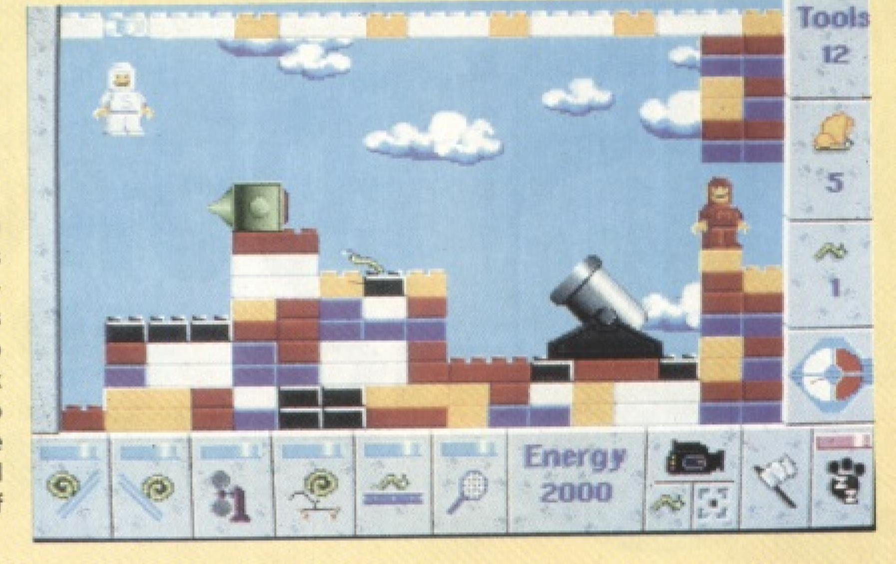


CREEPERS

Psygnosis

I'm going to try and make it through this preview without mentioning the 'L' word, something which is always hard to do when talking about puzzle games, especially when they're from Psygnosis.

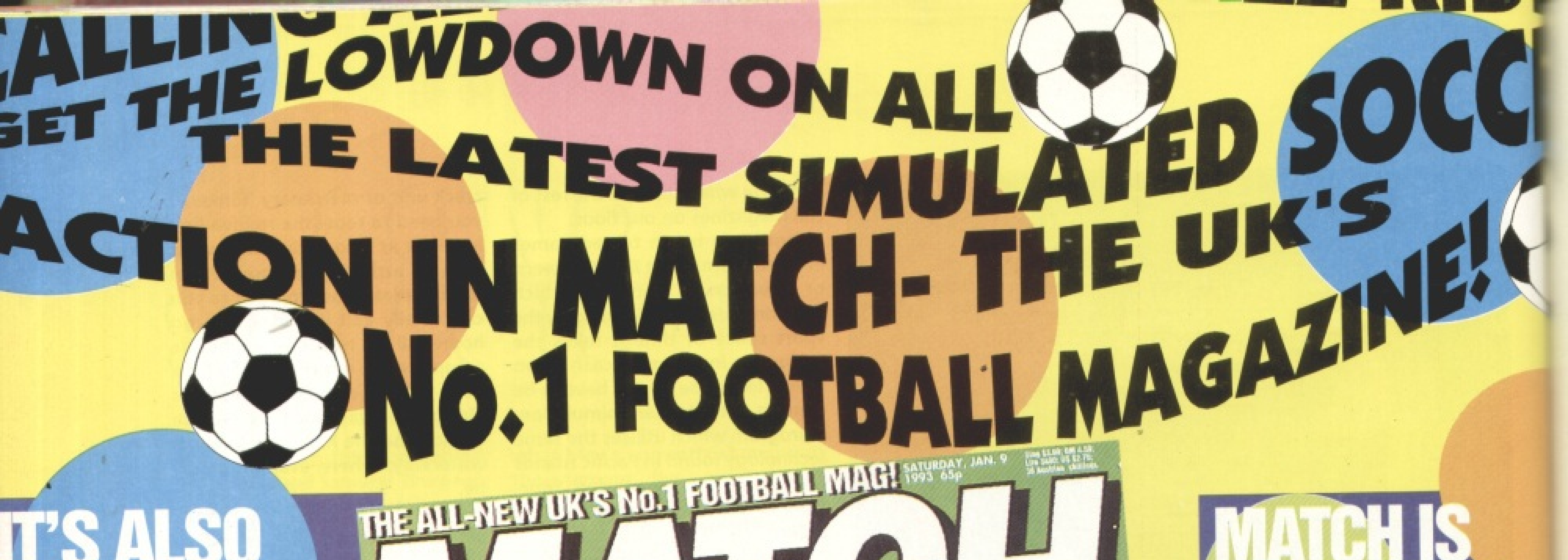
The Creepin' species are having a spot of bother from their mates and a set number of these creatures need to make a hazardous trek across their land and onto pastures new. Yes, we're back with the old save-'em-ups so you'll not be surprised with the way the game is played, but I'll tell you anyway. By using some of the special icons and building blocks, you need to create a safe path for the cuties to be able to make it through the game's seventy levels with one push (a bit like Bill's Tomato Game, in that respect). As you'd expect, there are a plethora of nasties and fiendish traps which do their best to hamper the Creepers' progress so a mixture of pondering and swift reactions is the only thing which will go some way to guaranteeing success.



Creepers has been a long time in development and the release date has been pushed back several times because the American coders have been having a few last minute problems. Rather than rush the game out as a PC port, Psygnosis have decided to hold back until the game is as good as it possibly can be, which can only be a good thing. Let's hope other developers (mentioning no names, of course) will sit up and take notice.

We've still yet to receive a rough indication of the release date for Creepers but I wouldn't hold your breath (unless you're trying to turn your face blue, that is). Expect a full review just as soon as we can lay our hands on a copy.

There you go, I did it. Right, who's for a game of Lemmings 2, then? Damn.



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REVIEWS

June 1993

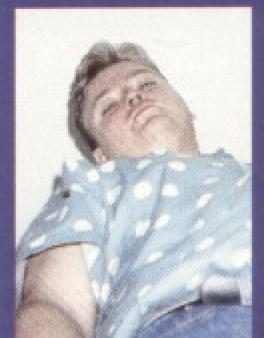
THE SCORES

All elements of our games are rated out of a possible maximum score of a hundred. But what do the scores actually mean?

0-25	Rubbish. Offensively low quality.
26-49	Below average. Not acceptable by today's standards.
50-60	Above average. But still plenty of room for improvement.
61-70	Fair to good. Lots of nice points, but in no way perfect.
70-80	Pretty smart. Above accepted standards.
81-90	Extremely good. Top notch impressiveness.
90+	Simply excellent. Breathtaking.

THE OVERALL SCORE

Obviously, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, the Overall figure is the best gauge as to whether the game is any good or not. While representative of the elements, it is not an average of the other scores. That's why it isn't called THE AVERAGE.



DAVID UPCHURCH

Dave spent a day in Bath this month with his great mates at Asylum. Unfortunately, though, that's about as far as he's got to actually washing himself recently and we're all getting a bit worried, what with the hot weather on its way. News of Dave's bathing habits has obviously travelled far and wide as we've started receiving press releases adressed to the 'Beauty Editor' (and that's true). Is someone taking the Michael or what? Apart from that, it's been an inssue of sneaking away early quite a bit (you wouldn't want to know why, honest) and then delegating all his work to the other 'little people' when he realised how little he'd actually managed to achieve. Ah, the joys of being in control.



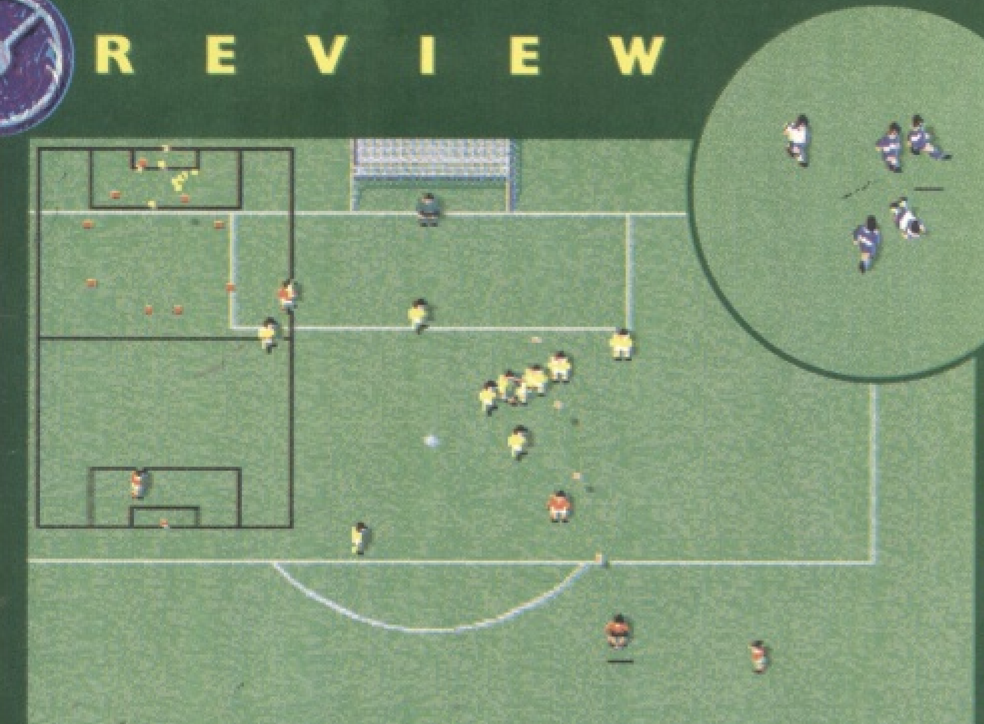
SIMON BYRON

Just when we thought the boy Byron's sadness levels could go no further, he surprised us all this month by being so pathetic it makes us shudder in disbelief. He contacted his mate at the BBC and asked him if he could get a signed publicity shot of Anthea Turner and after a few days of frantic worrying an envelope was duly delivered containing a Blue Peter badge and two pictures, both signed by the bubbly presenter. Simon then spent the rest of the day showing these photos off to anyone within walking distance (we managed to stop him from getting a taxi venturing outside), proclaiming that him and 'Anth' were and item. Not a happy chappy, not happy at all.



JENNY ABROOK

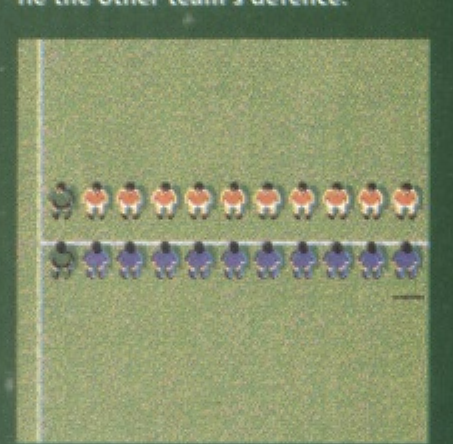
Regular readers will know that Gary recently left these pleasant shores to work on the multi-format beach that is CVG. What we didn't reveal was that we'd negotiated a kind of swap - our ugly ex-Dep for one of their cheerful and lovely Designers. And here she is - the lovely Jenny (24). She's settled into her new role as The One's Art Editor with unheard-of enthusiasm, redesigning this, improving that - it's all quite frightening, really. She's also tried to introduce a new culinary delight into the office; fruit salad baby food. Ugh! By the way, the reason for the blurred piccy is that Jenny refused to do a moody 'looking down' shot and wanted one of her 'dancing' (apparently).



(Left) Red and yellow cards make a regular appearance throughout the game so you have to be constantly weary of lunging from behind. If you do feel the need to play a particularly harsh game then it's worth knowing that all the referees (yes, there are loads) have a different degree of lenience so the more tolerant ones will be more inclined to let a few dirty tackles pass.

(Left) Free kicks are taken in much the same way as throw-ins (using the arc system) but, again unlike Sensi, the other side can adjust his/her wall before the shot is taken until they are happy with the set up. They are allowed a few moments to position the wall and even add/subtract players so that they can defend as well as possible against any sneaky set pieces.

(Below) You can set the formation you want to kick off with before the game begins or at any time during play. All the usual permutations are included so you can play either a flat-back four; with a strong defensive line-up or even, if you're confident, increase the amount of forwards so that when the ball is in the opponent's half you'll have enough players to pass the ball around with ease and baffle the other team's defence.



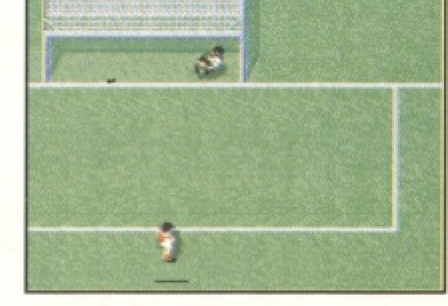
GOAL!

Only Simon Byron knows how good Virgin's footy game is, and he's telling all.

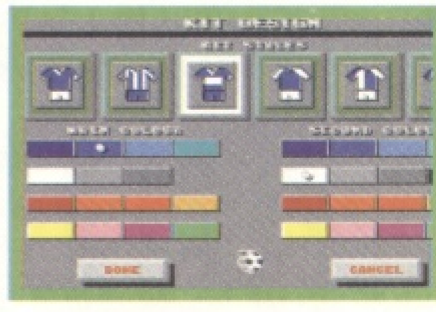
Has anyone noticed the advert for Goal!? You know, the one with the slightly blurred picture of two geezers playing football? There's one in this here issue and if you have a quick gander at it and remove all the letters coloured red you'll notice that, when rearranged, they spell 'Fock the rike'. Are they trying to tell us something, or what?

Subliminal messages aside, Goal! is the game that was originally developed to be Kick Off 3 but we're probably not supposed to talk about it. Apparently, Anco still hold the rights to the Kick Off name and you may yet see a game called Kick Off 3 but the bad news for them is that there's really no need as Goal! boots the Kick Off games into a cocked hat - a feat many thought was impossible.

With the introduction of two views, the addition of selectable directions of play and the inclusion of squillions of new features, Dino Dini has stuck to his original claim of "wanting to create another sequel which is worth buying". The question on everybody's lips, though, is "Is it better than Sensible Soccer?". That's a tough one for sure and at this stage it's too close to call. Let's have a look at how the game plays and we'll talk about it in The Verdict, yeah?



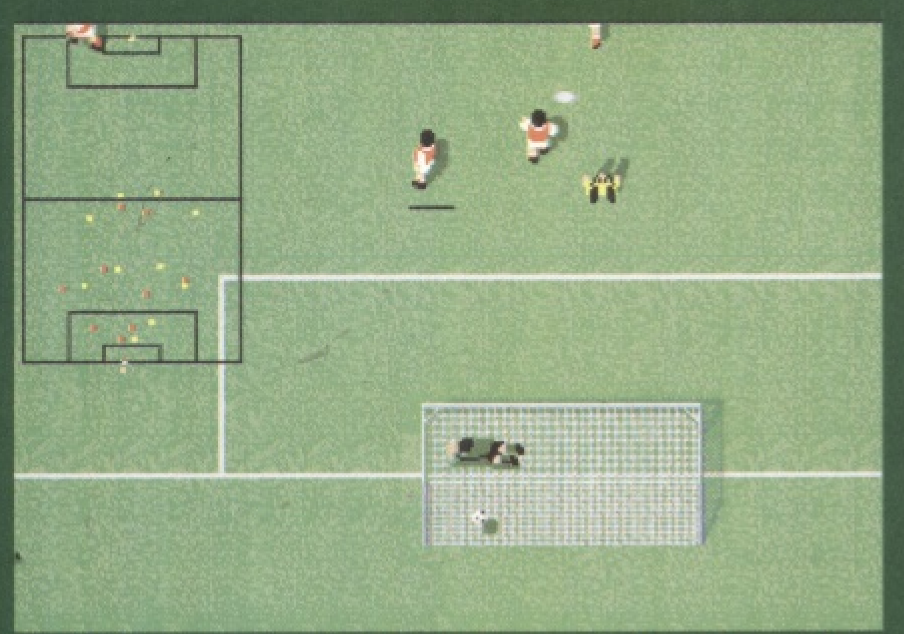






Not content with letting all footballers define their own cup, Dino has included a team editor with which it is possible to change your fave (or not so fave) team's colours to make them look hard or poofy - the choice is, as they say, yours. Individual players can have their names changed if you so wish but the stats (represented in an easy to understand bar system) are fixed to stop cheaters from making the team super fast.

The scanner in the corner of the screen may not be of use to everyone (it is quite hard keeping up with the players when they're represented by a couple of pixels) but, you guessed it, if it offends you then you can alter its position, size, choose whether you want it to display the players' numbers or even, if you feel that strongly about it, turn the damn thing off.



Now this is what we like to see (unless you are on the receiving end, of course) - a gooooooaaaaalllll! If you fancy seeing your hard work over and over again (and rubbing dirt in the other player's face) then you can replay the last few moments and view the move as many times as you like, from either the close-up view, from afar or any combination of the two.

DESIGN CUP

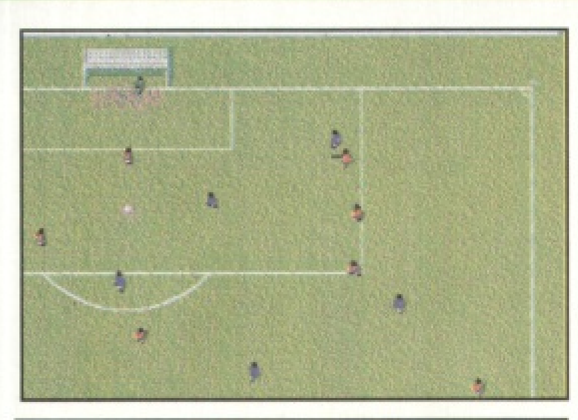
CUP NAME	THE GOAL! CUP					
AWAY GOALS	NO		YES			
ROUNDS	1	2	3	4	5	

NUMBER OF TEAMS ➔ 2

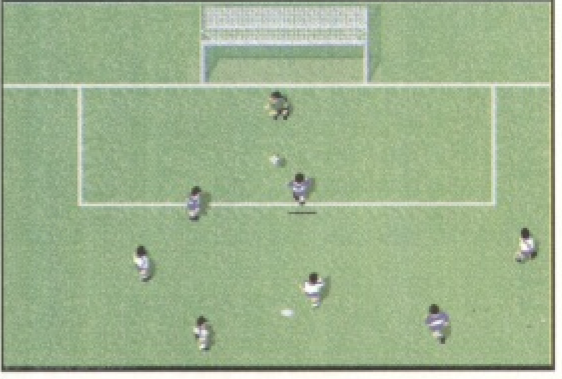
	PRE-SEMI		SEMI		FINAL	
LEGS	1	2	1	2	1	2
EXTRA TIME	NO	YES RPLY	NO	YES RPLY	NO	YES RPLY
PENALTIES	NO	YES RPLY	NO	YES RPLY	NO	YES RPLY

PLAY CANCEL

You're not restricted to boring FA, European or Coca Cola cups - Goal! allows an infinite amount of variations. Select how many teams are to contest the trophy, how many legs each round will consist of and so on - all the options you'd expect from a cup editing-type thing.



One of the novel features in Goal! is the fact that all players accelerate and decelerate as they would in real life so to get up to full speed can take a couple of seconds. And if that wasn't enough, so does the ball, which means should you wish to stop or turn suddenly you need to perform a special trick known as the trap turn (impressive, eh?).



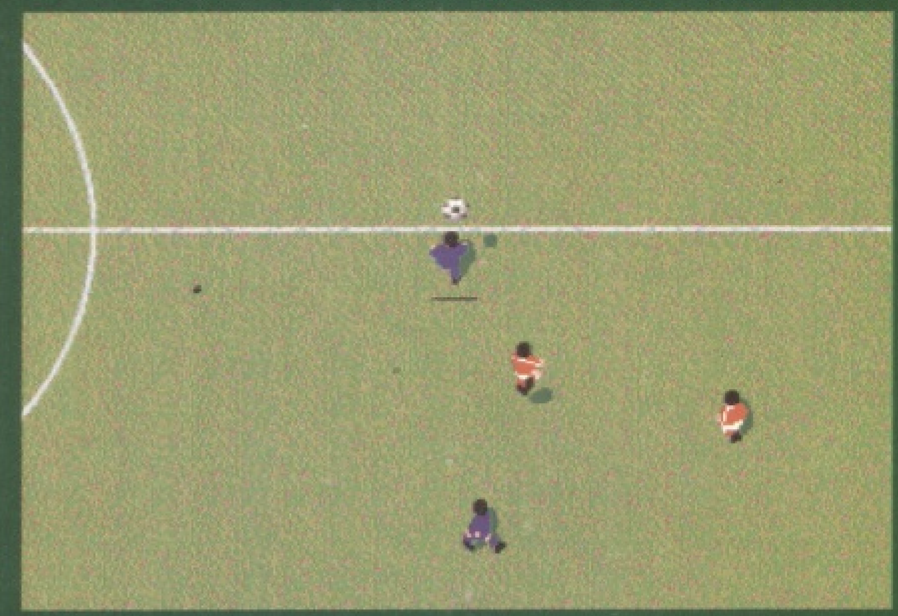
If Goal! had ears there'd be new features coming out of them. Take the way the players move, for example. This is one part of the game which is hardest to master because rather than being able to turn on the spot, everyone has a turning circle (which means that they reverse directions by running in a small semi-circle), shunting them sideways slightly.







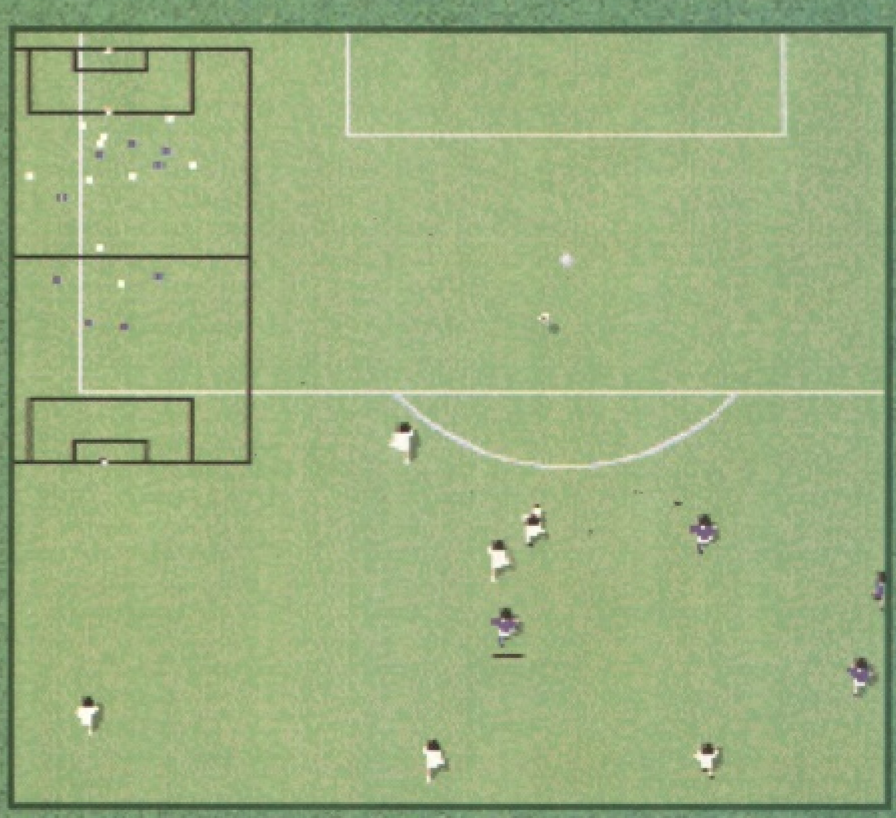
Unlike Sensible Soccer, where throw-ins are taken by pointing the bloke who's going to chuck the ball in the rough direction you want the ball to end up, Goal(!)'s system pulls away from the larger sprites (if you've got the view set to automatic) which allows a far greater degree of accuracy. Just swivel the arc to where you want to chuck to, set the height and away you go.

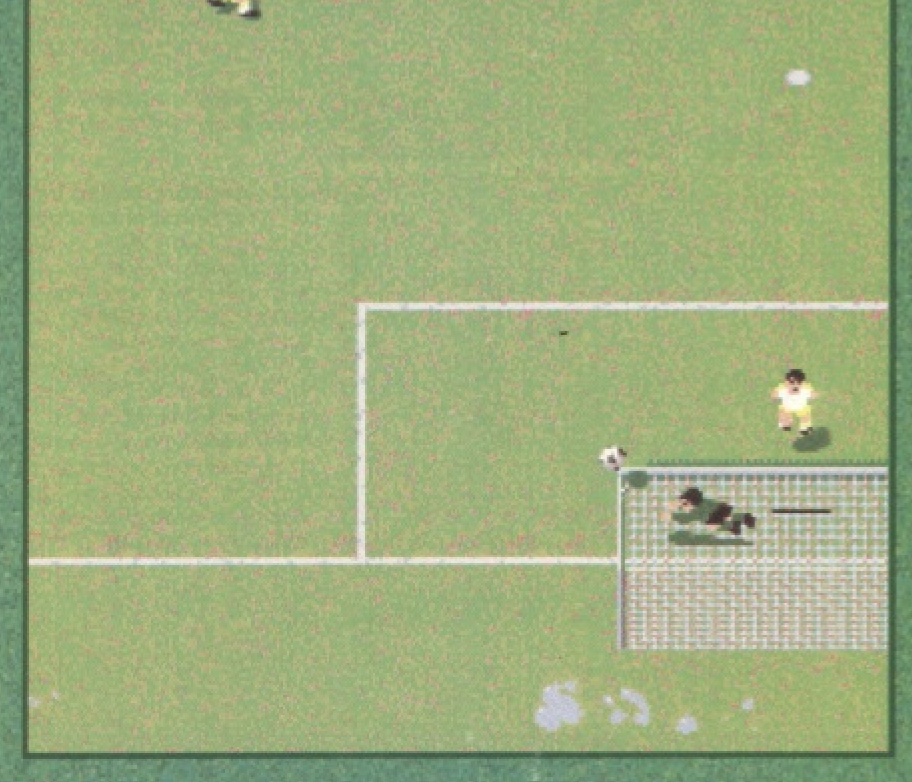


Goal! uses virtually the same aftertouch method employed in most modern footy games (i.e pulling pack when running forward will produce a lob) but hardened Sensi players may find a little trouble when they first attempt Dino's game because the two types of kicks (passes and shots) are reversed. To shoot you need to tap the Firebutton and to pass you need to keep your finger on the button for a little longer.

PITCHES OF GOALSTWICK

As in real life, there are a number of different types of pitch, all of which affect the ball to some extent. There aren't any crummy third division postage-stamp pitches to play on but any of the four shown below can be played either vertically or horizontally (like Wembley down the bottom there) and viewed from either close up or far away, depending on your particular persuasion.





NORMAL



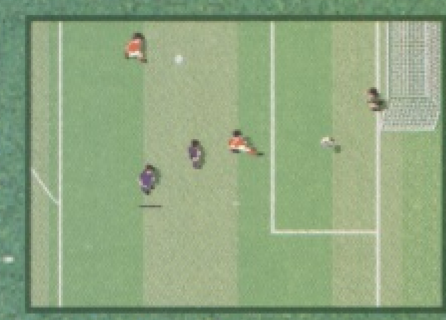
The normal pitch is best for training on as the ball fairs pretty much as you'd expect it to in real life; the bounce is as normal as it could possibly be and it travels an average distance with a minimum of fuss. You'll find this pitch is perfect for flowing football.

WET

The arrival of the English summer inevitably brings with it a torrent of rain and Goal's wet pitch is as water logged as a swimming pool. When playing ninety minutes on this type of grass you'll notice that the ball skates further and bounces less. You get the idea?

MUDDY

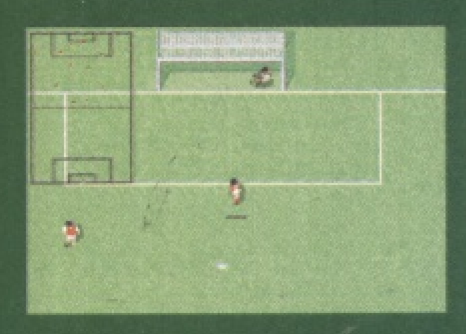
This kind of pitch is the sort they use to test out revolutionary washing powders on the players' kit. When the earth turns to mud it affects the ball in ways you may not believe - it hardlt bounces at all and grinds to a halt within a few seconds hitting the floor.



WEMBLEY

So here it is - the stadium home to all things great like Madonna and U2 concerts. Oh, and all great footballing occasions as well, like the one's you find in Goal! On this oh-so-perfect pitch you'll notice that the ball bounces terrifically and there's less ground friction.





The practice mode allows anyone who's new to the game to have a quick knock-about and get to grips with the control method. There is no opposing team so you can run around without fear of being tackled and concentrate on familiarising yourself with the after-touch and messing around on the pitch. There are goalies at either end to enable you to shoot in both directions.



Depending on how well you're doing, this screen can either be used to reinforce your brilliance or shut you up. It's the Match Report, you see, which lists everything from the number of fouls your team has committed, the amount goals you've scored (you'd have to be particularly thick not to know that) and even display, in a convenient percentage, how much play both sides have enjoyed.



(Above the man's arm) Cups may not be your cup of tea and if that's the case then you'd be advised to play in a more physically demanding league. Here you have to do consistently well to become the champions as one-off wins count for nothing. You can alter any aspect of the league and although you can apply this to just about anything in Goal!, it's worth repeating just so you know.

(Right) Before Jenny nipped off to the Picture Library the other day, I asked her to get some pictures of star QPR players such as Les and Ray (great mates of mine, you know). "Okay," she said and off she went. This, then, is what she came back with and I'm expected to write a lengthy caption about it. Designers, eh?

THE VERDICT

Goal! is undoubtedly a superb game. Initially the control method can prove a little tough to master but, with the two practise modes, Dino has ensured that there's ample opportunity for everyone to learn the various moves until they feel ready for a proper game. Once you're proficient enough to kick the ball about with some degree of confidence, the system allows for some pretty snazzy play and, because it's not as simple as the Sensi control method, any goal scored proves to be immensely satisfying due to the work involved. The range of options is utterly incredible - it seems as if Goal! has an ideal setting for every football fan, no matter what style of game they prefer. There doesn't appear to be any major slowdown when the screen gets cluttered (something which couldn't be said about Sensi, unless you play it on an A1200) but a decrease in speed would occasionally help as the game shifts like Billy Whizz on steroids. This is all well and good, but is Goal! better than Sensible Soccer? It depends what you're after, really. Sensi was immediately accessible and the way it played ensured that anyone - be he a newcomer or Sensi veteran - could pick the game up and have a great time. Goal!, however, requires a lot more concentration and the realistic features like the turning circles and player acceleration elevate the game from being an arcade-style affair to something nearing a simulation. Whichever way you look at it, Goal! is one hell of a game and brilliant fun to play but I'm feel that the office favourite will, perhaps unfairly, remain Sensible Soccer - mainly because it's easier for novices to grasp. Don't let that stop you from buying it - you can never have too many good football games and Goal! is certainly one of the best.

Publisher: Virgin
Developer: Dino Dini

£??.?? Out Now

Joystick

MEMORY 1Mb | DISKS 2

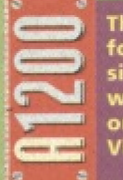
GRAPHICS 89%

SOUND 87%

PLAYABILITY 91%

LASTABILITY 90%

OVERALL 91%



A1200

There are no plans for an A1200 version but Dino would like to do one. How about it, Virgin?

HUMAN RACE

THE JURASSIC LEVELS

David Upchurch prepares to rip out his cave-man-like locks once again over Mirage's Humans data-disk..

Isn't it strange to reflect that a mere two years ago, most people would have had little idea what the term 'Jurassic' actually meant. Now, with the imminent release of Spielburg's bound-to-be-a-block-buster, why call a game 'The Dinosaur Levels'? Just in case you were wondering, or happened to be reading lesser quality Amiga publications recently, The Jurassic Levels is by no means a sequel to Mirage's early attempt at a Lemmings beater. What you have here are one hundred spanking new levels, each designed at a moment's notice and aiming to take you through some deadly terrain with ever deadlier puzzles and traps.

The idea remains the same. You control a number of cavemen, somewhere between two and eight, who you have to take them through a series of scrolling puzzles using their extremely limited capabilities and your overstretched imagination to battle through the kind of impossible situation only seen on, well, Humans really. This time, however, you have more than holes in the ground and angry tribesmen to contend with. There's dinos in them there hills, and I don't mean the kind that write top selling football games! So, once you've leapt over the chasm using your spear, reached impossible heights by building human ladders and figured out exactly what a rope is useful for, you might just end up as Tyrannosaurus fodder. Good luck!



There is absolutely no leeway whatsoever allowed for each level. You are told to begin with exactly how many members are in your tribe, and how many are needed to solve the puzzle. If only five are necessary, then five is all you'll get. If one dies, though, a reserve will be drafted in.

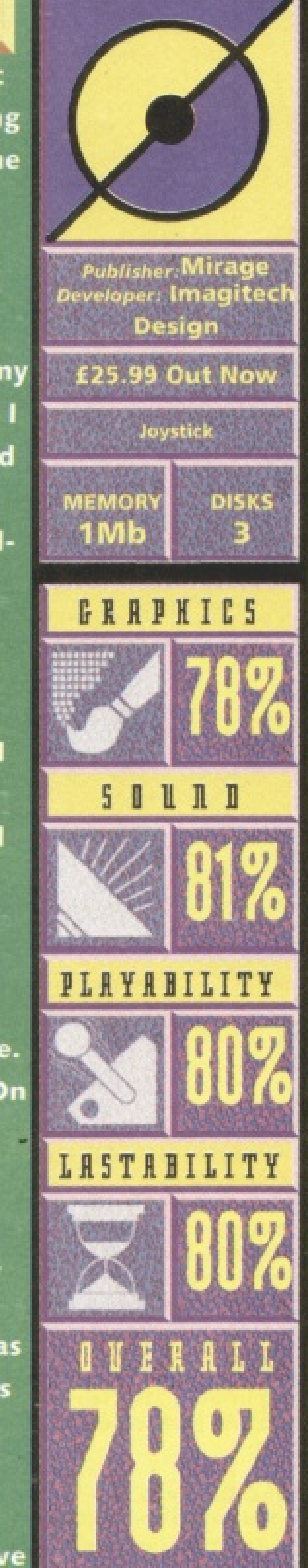


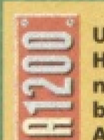
Trained at the New York School Of Performing Arts, these particular Neanderthals are capable of creating huge shaky human towers, just right for reaching those high levels.

It is generally accepted that a scene like this is impossible, that dinosaurs had long died out before man appeared, but how true is this? It's a fact that Imagitec dispute strongly, giving reasons for the absence of dinosaurs in cave paintings such as someone rubbed the dinosaur off.

THE VERDICT

Quite possibly the most prehistoric thing about this game is the loading system. It has been a very long time indeed since I have had to wait so long for a menu screen to appear. Two minutes and three disk swaps to see a scrolling screen that Easy AMOS could do in a stroke is not my idea of excellent presentation. But I won't let that spoil my fun. I would like to simply say that if you enjoyed Humans, and found it challenging enough to merit another hundred levels, then this is the package for you. Unfortunately, I have to fill a lot more space than that. So, for your 26 sovs, you find yourself the lucky owner of the original Humans minus the original levels and with new, far trickier ones bolted on. This is not a game for the uninitiated. Learning the Humans logic takes time, and this isn't the game to give you any time. Not that the puzzles are illogical. On the contrary, I found them to be well thought out, yet challenging enough to keep you playing for weeks. That is to say, it should do. There's something about Humans that isn't quite right. Lemmings was highly addictive, and Troddlers was excellent in its own way, but Humans can be, well, tedious at times. I would have prefered mouse control over the clumsy joystick and keyboard combination, but then you can't have everything. On the whole, though, nothing has really changed. So, to repeat the closing comment at the start of this panel, if you liked the original, then you'll feel right at home with this extra-levels update.





Unfortunately, Human Race is not compatible with the A1200, nor is it ever likely to be. A spokesperson for Mirage claims that an enhanced version might be available in the fourth quarter of this year, but it's doubtful.

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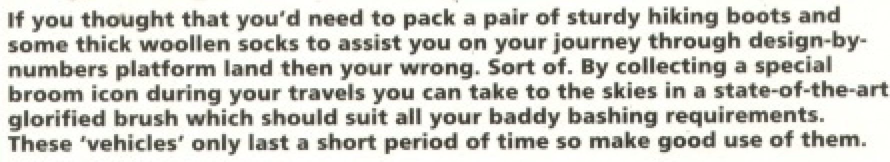
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If you thought that you'd need to pack a pair of sturdy hiking boots and some thick woollen socks to assist you on your journey through design-by-numbers platform land then your wrong. Sort of. By collecting a special broom icon during your travels you can take to the skies in a state-of-the-art glorified brush which should suit all your baddy bashing requirements. These 'vehicles' only last a short period of time so make good use of them.



Unlike most platform games, the display below all the action is actually a necessity rather than a cosmetic addition which serves no useful purpose. Not only does it display the amount of lives and energy remaining as you'd expect but also the power of your throw (which determines how far some of the lesser spells will travel) and also how many more times you can use that spell before it needs to be powered-up once again.

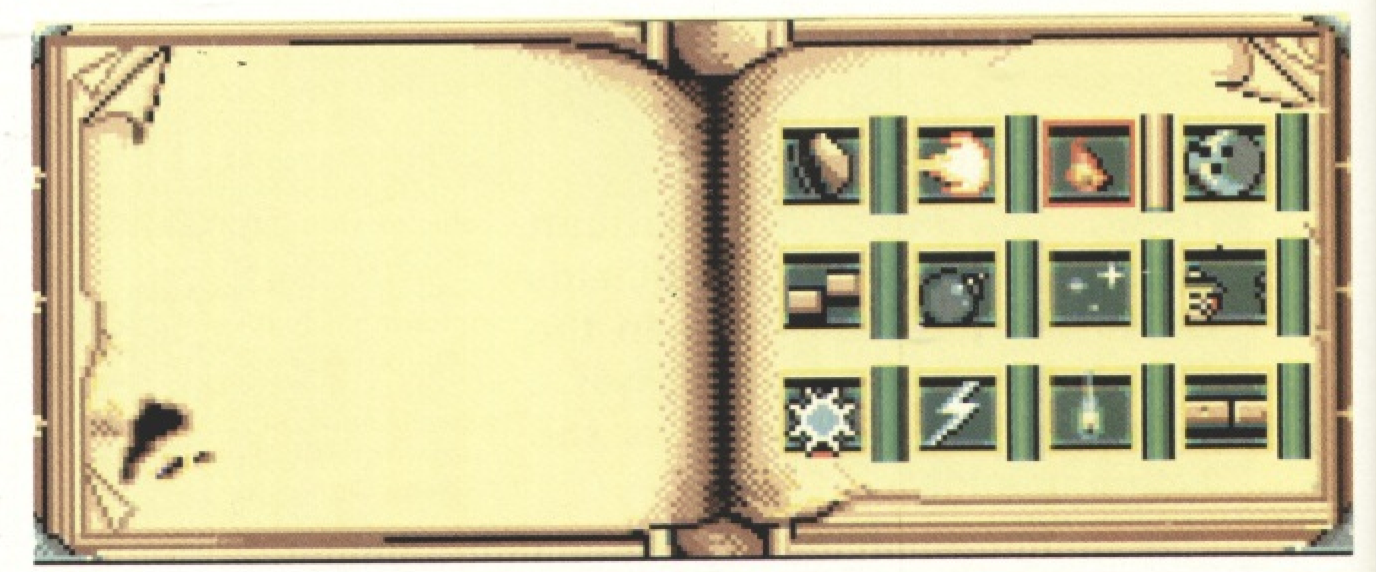
SUPER CAULDRON

What with Halloween being, ooh, only a mere four or five months away, it seems as if scary platform games are going to be the players' choice for the next few months. Except they're not, as Simon Byron reveals.

Big Mac's 'n fries with a double helping of lard and heart disease, please. Gee, ain't your accent just sooooo quaint? Why don't we make soccer a game of four quarters, y'know, with cheerleaders, Twinky bars and hot-dogs every fifteen minutes? You crazeee mutha! Getoutahere, you kill me. Watergate. Bill Clinton. Etc.

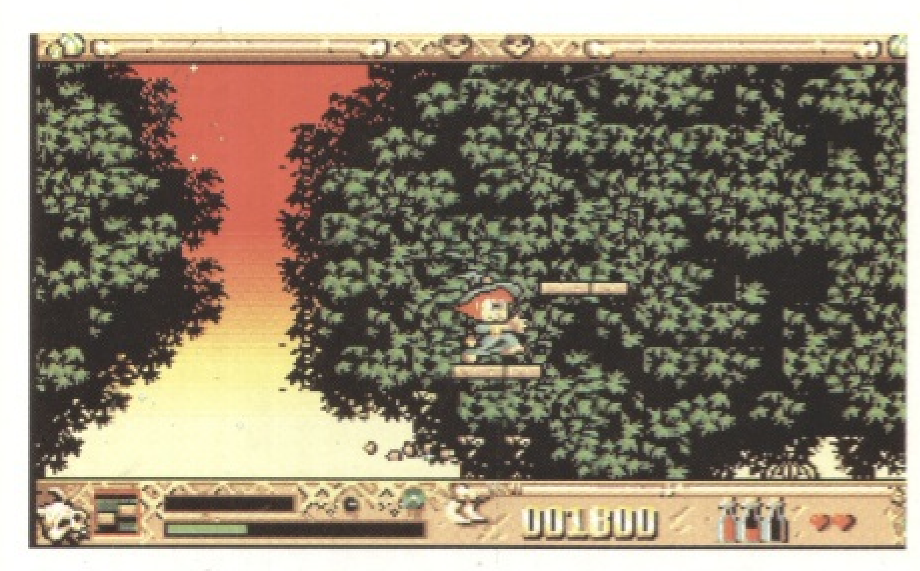
What GCSEs (or O-Levels, pensioners) did you lot take? Yeah, we all sat through maths and physics but hands up those of you who opted to take American. Not many, I can see, but Titus would have you believe that we all speak, well, Yankish. Yes, the back of the box that Super Cauldron comes in indicates that the instructions are in Italian (Aiuta Zmira la sipatica strega a...), what looks like Portuguese (Ayunda a Zmira, la brunja...), German (Helfen Sie Zmira, der freundlichen...), French (Aidez Zmira la gentille sorciere...) and American (Help Zmira the friendly witch find her...). I though it was called English. Where will this fascination with our Yank cousins end?

In Cauldron, probably. It's been taken over by an Evil Sorcerer, y'see, who's found a powerful magic chest which rewards its owner with untold power and all the things which make megalomaniacs so thoroughly bad. He's taken over the entire land and dispatched billions of horrendously ugly creatures to stand in the way of any brave little witches called Zmira who want to restore Cauldron to its peaceful state once again. Which is a bit unfortunate considering that's exactly what you are...

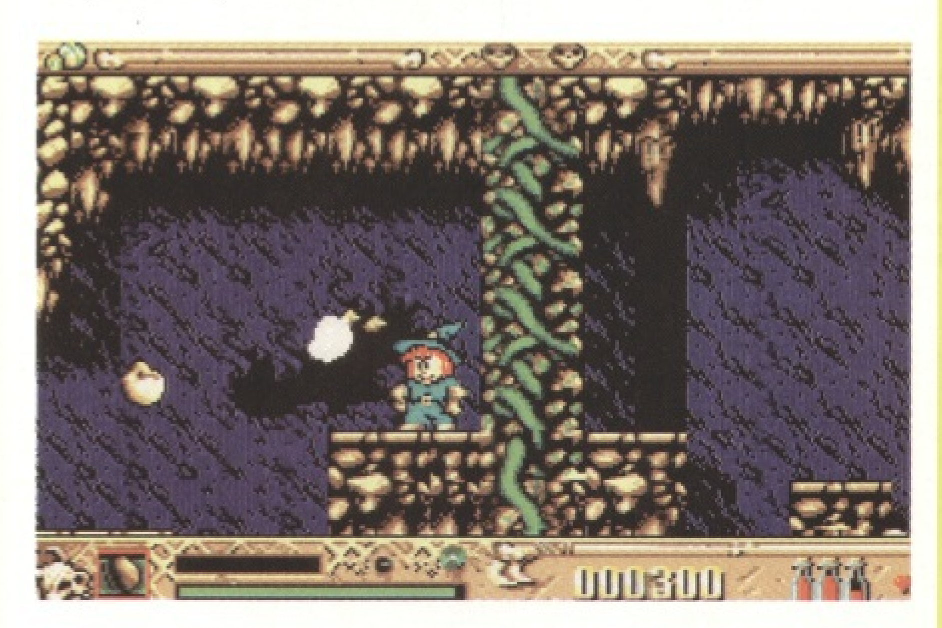


Swapping between your spells isn't as automatic as you'd imagine. You need to hit the Return key to call up this spell book which fills up with magical potions just as rapidly as you can collect them. You can use each spell whenever you see fit but most are suited to specific times and locations and you'll often find that you don't have what it takes to enable you to travel a little further into the levels.

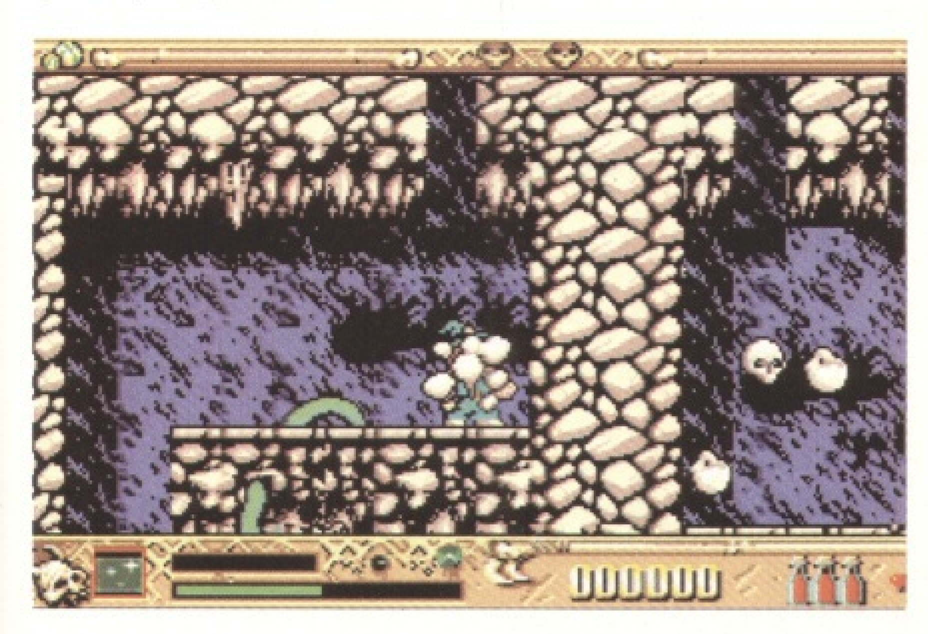




The more useful spells are obviously few and far between so when you do discover one it's best to think carefully before you over-use them. If you do run out of magical powers then you'll need to destroy a few meanies as doing so usually turns them into a hopping mad frog. Whenever you collect one of these slimy toads it increases your reserves of the spell which is currently in use so you can cast it some more.



There seem to be more secret levels that proper levels in Super Cauldron and by entering them you can usually stumble across loads of valuable power-ups and maybe pick up the object you need to move on to another world. What's odd about this part of the game is that some exits (indicated by two upright posts) in the middle of the secret areas can whisk you promptly right back to the start so you often feel a little apprehensive about exploring too much.



As Zmira, your objective is to locate a key which will enable you to discover the secret of the magic book, whatever that may be. A good thing about the game is that there is no time limit so you can virtually take as much time as you like to find this valuable object. It's not all a bed of roses, however, the restart points are pretty far apart, meaning that whenever you die there's usually a long trek before you can continue where you left off.

THE VERDICT

Super Cauldron has all the makings of a good platform game but the new ideas the game introduces fall way short of retaining this status. True, there isn't any jumping on the heads of the adversaries to dispose of them but the initial method of attack is frustrating in the extreme. Having to carefully judge the arc of the rocks soon becomes tiresome and doesn't allow much in the way of leniency so you quite often find yourself just avoiding the critters and desperately hoping that you'll soon come across a more powerful and usable spell. I understand that there has to be some incentive to power-up but finding yourself equipped with such a non-destructive weapon in the first place can be a little disheartening. The scrolling is weird as well. Rather than constantly keeping up with Zmira, the screen moves in jumps and starts so you can often find the display unhelpfully restricting your vision. Once you start discovering the various secret rooms things take a slight turn for the better. If you've managed to find enough spells then you can progress fairly quickly, although these areas do seem to be designed to allow progress only if you've discovered a certain power, which is annoying, especially if you've journeyed all that way for nothing. With a few improvements (and a touch more imagination) there would be much fun to be had. Graphically, there's nothing detrimental to say apart from the fact that some of the backgrounds look harmful when they're actually not (the fire being an obvious example) so you often spend most of your first attempt at a level avoiding things you needn't, making the job of successfully completing them all the more harder. I don't know, you could go on about Super Cauldron's mild inadequacies for ever but, at the end of the day, what we have here is a game which is, well, just above average.

Publisher: Titus
Developer: In-house

£29.99 Out Now

Joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
512k	2

GRAPHICS	66%
SOUND	56%
PLAYABILITY	60%
LASTABILITY	62%
OVERALL	59%



You have to go through the 'Disable CPU caches' rigmarole before you can begin to 'enjoy' Super Cauldron on the A1200, which will soon prove to be more trouble than it's worth.



David Upchurch, with his scientific background, is in his elements with Millennium's new arcade action puzzler...

Slightly disappointingly, Morph has nothing to do with that little plasticine bloke whose animated antics used to liven up Tony Hart's otherwise tedious 'art for the masses' TV programme Take Hart - clever pun that, eh? - on Childrens BBC (as they call it now). Which is a pity, really, because I used to quite like him, in a non-pervy kind or way.

But anyway, Morph is all about the adventures of young scamp Morris Rolph, or (somewhat tenuously) Morph to his mates. One day, he pops over to see his eccentric chum Professor Krankenpot. To his amazement (and our incredulity) he discovers that the Prof has invented a teleporter device. Morph, the cheeky tyke that he is, can't wait to try it out and jumps onto one of the teleport platforms.

But then disaster strikes! Just as the Prof pulls the lever to begin the teleportation a bolt of lightning from the storm raging outside strikes the house, blowing the machine to kingdom come. When the smoke clearsthe dismayed Prof discovers that Morph has been turned into a swirling cloud of atoms, able to metamorphose into one of four states of varying density.

If Morph is ever to regain his human form he must find all the parts of the teleporter that have been scattered around the house and surrounding area by the explosion. Only then can the Prof rebuild the machine and save Morph from becoming the star exhibit in a circus freak show.

What we have here, then, is an arcade puzzle game. There are twenty-four machine parts, represented by cogs, to be found, each one hidden in its own unique level. Using Morph's four very different mutations you have to navigate your way around the levels, find the cog and then locate the exit. It's quite difficult to explain (as you'll see) but it's very easy to play. So let's crack on...



The game's twenty-four levels are split into four zones of six levels each - the laboratory, the garden, the factory and the sewers - with the difficulty increasing steeply as you work your way through them. The level select screen shown here allows you to play any zone you want and in any order, so if you get bored of the garden you can try your hand at the factory, say. To finish the game, however, ALL the levels must be completed.

LET ME TAKE YOU BY THE HAND...

They say that the best way to teach is by example (or something) so why not follow this little map to find out how you play Morph...?

START HERE! This is where it all begins, with Morph as a tiny drop of water.

Drop down here and collect the bonus cloud transform icon.

Look under the table and what do you find - a bonus global transform icon!

Time to turn into a rubber ball! Now hit the plug switch to turn on the fan...

...And you'll be blown up here. Good thing rubber balls float!

There's the cog - but your attempt to get it lands you in the bath!

Turning into a cloud gets you out of this deeply nasty situation...

You can go exploring up here... but there's nothing to see

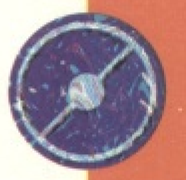
Float, float, float... Might as well take that rubber ball transform icon on the way.

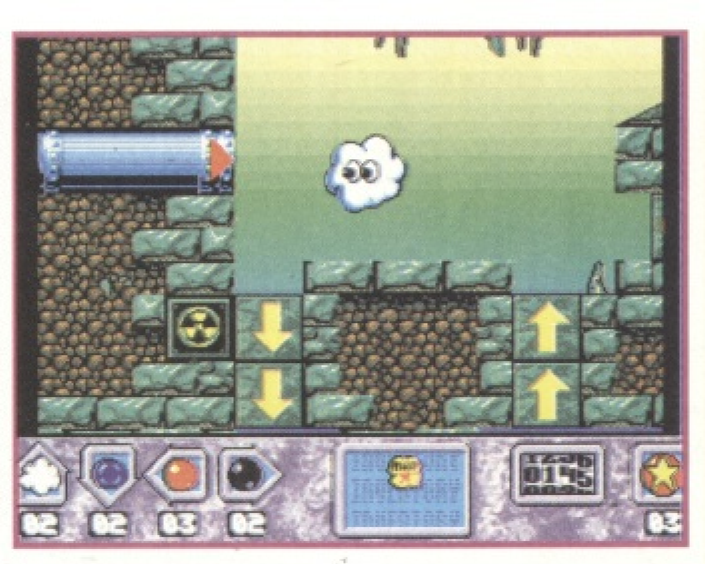
Why not change into the ball for the last leg of the journey?

Made it! The level is complete! Or is it...?

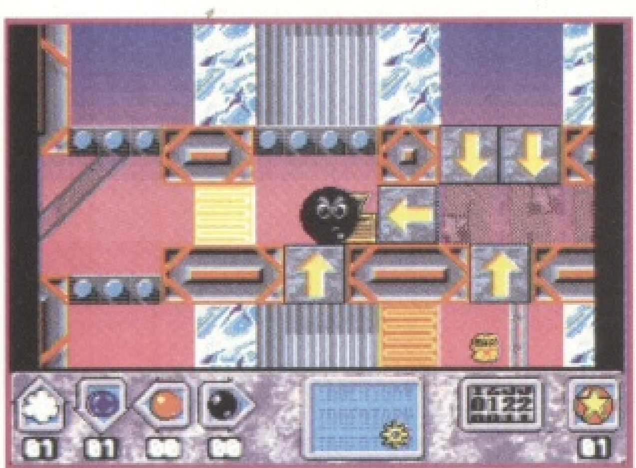
Stay in your cloud form and you'll float up here...

...To where all manner of lovely bonuses await!





At the start of each level you are given a limited number of each transformation, as indicated by the numbers below the symbols at the bottom of the screen. In addition there's a 'global' limit as well, shown in the bottom-right of the screen, restricting the number of times you can transform overall. Exceed any of these limits and you fail the level and have to try again, although bonus transformation icons can often be picked up along the way.



The game's twenty-four levels are split into four zones of six levels each - the laboratory, the garden, the factory and the sewers - with the difficulty increasing steeply as you work your way through them. The level select screen shown here allows you to play any zone you want and in any order, so if you get bored of the garden you can try your hand at the factory, say. To finish the game, however, ALL the levels must be completed.

LOOK AT THE STATE OF YOU!

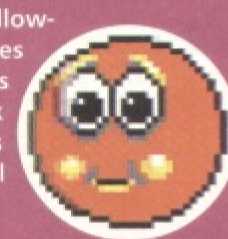
Morph can be metamorphosed into any one of four very different states, each with certain advantages and disadvantages. Here they all are, then.



GAS CLOUD
This is the least dense state Morph can turn into. As a cloud Morph can float horizontally or upwards but not down, making him handy for getting over high ledges but little else. He can also pass through grills. In this form he's impervious to most dangers except fans, which will suck him up.



WATER DROP
As a water drop Morph slips and slides all over the place, making him hard to control. He can pass through grills in the wall or the floor but he should look out for drains or he'll be flushed away to his doom. Apart from that he's pretty robust and is very handy for putting out fires.



RUBBER BALL
Morph the rubber ball is good at bouncing, allowing him to reach certain platforms and ledges unaccessible by any other state except the gas cloud. He can also smash through certain, weak blocks. The ball's main disadvantage is his fragility, as thorns will pop him and fires will burn him.



SOLID BOULDER
The boulder is impervious to any damage and, with a run up, can smash through any obstructions. Being heavy, though, it can't bounce at all and can often get trapped down pits and at the bottom of ledges. His other main threat is water, in which he'll sink without trace.

THE VERDICT

I like Morph, I really do. It's got a lot of character, although I would have liked the four states to have had more individual 'personality' - the solid boulder looks a bit mean and grumpy but that's about it. For what is essentially a puzzle game there's a lot of action and you'll have to perform some pretty nifty transformations to get through some of the tougher levels - for once arcade puzzler really DOES mean arcade puzzler. Although there's not a great deal of variety in the types of threat you face, the constant need to change form and the very different abilities of each state mean that boredom never sets in. It's a great game, basically. The only downer is the difficulty level. Morph is, for the most part, very easy. Although there's a lot of trial and error involved in finding the solution to a level you can retry as many times as you want, so they don't take too long to crack. I'd imagine that most players will get through the laboratory and the garden - that's half the game - in a day's play. The factory's a bit tougher but not much more and the sewer is, to be fair, a sod but, even so, I doubt whether Morph represents much more than a week's play for the average Amiga gamer. This easiness is a real pity because there's so much to recommend the game. If you're normally a bit crap at arcade puzzlers then give Morph a go but if you're looking for a challenge then move along please, 'cos there's nothing to see here.

Publisher: Millennium
Developer: In-house

£25.99 Out Now

joystick

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	88%
LASTABILITY	54%
OVERALL	77%



A1200 **Totally compatible but, as with so many games at the moment, there's no significant improvment in performance.**

SIMON SAYS...
This isn't the start of a new policy or anything like that - after all, most of the time Dave and I agree 100% percent on the marks we award and The One Camp is mainly a happy one. But this time I feel I have to stick my oar in, so to speak. Dave's hinted at how easy the game is but I think his estimate of playing time is wildly inaccurate. Alright, this may keep you occupied for seven days if you plug your joystick in the wrong port but it took me one and a half hours to play through two Zones (half the game) and about another hour and a bit to almost complete the Sewer Zones (supposedly the toughest). If there were twice as many zones in Morph then I'd agree with the mark but as it stands I reckon you'd get a solid day's play tops and the mark should be somewhere in the forties.

FIREHAWK

After the success of Crystal Kingdoms Dizzy, CodeMasters have decided that another £19.99 game is just the job. But, as Simon Byron explains, you might want to remain unemployed for the time being.

CodeMasters' second almost full-price game is a helicopter shoot-'em-up which, on the surface anyway, sounds a lot like Electronic Arts's Desert Strike. Lafia, a small republic in the middle of nowhere, houses the world's most powerful drug barons who have formed an all-conquering alliance and completely taken over the place, the brutes. The government of the beleaguered country has decided that enough is enough and it's time to act but, because they haven't got quite as much heavy-duty firepower as they need, they've asked America (God bless it!) to storm in with their usual tact and blast the barons to kingdom come.

Unfortunately you can't just push the big red nuclear button and be done with it as there are a number of allied agents who are trapped in various parts of the islands. A more selective approach is called for as the hapless refugees hold vital information and therefore need to be rescued using the helicopter's invaluable winch thing.

Told you it sounded very much like EA's recent classic, didn't I? Of course, there are some pretty major differences, the main one being the way the action is depicted on-screen. Rather than opting for an isometric-3D view, the Codies have decided to show the carnage from above, in a sort of plan view, which probably enhances the gameplay and, of course, has nothing to do with the fact that traditional 2D graphics are easier to draw.

Firehawk is a conversion of a NES console game which apparently went 'top five' in America on its release last year. But will it repeat its success over here? Probably not, and here's why...



If you've managed to hover over a hostage for long enough then you'll enter this little sub-game. Enemy helicopters swoop in from the distance and you have to fend them off for as long as it takes for the prisoner to grasp hold of the winch. The sights on either side of your chopper move up and down and the idea of this bit is to push either left or right and fire at the same time as an enemy 'copter passes through them. A bit like the skeet shooting in Hyper Sports, if you remember that.

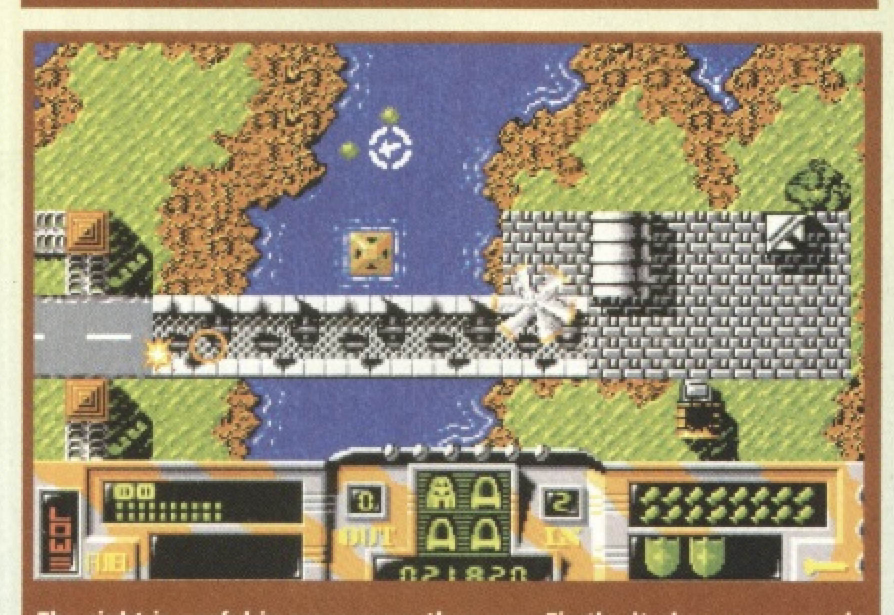
Shooting key targets often reveals icons which will, when collected, increase your shield (shown at the bottom of the screen) or add to your supply of bombs. These icons float north at quite a speed and as there's only a limited time before they disappear you have to act quickly if you want to increase your arsenal. Your shield value becomes depleted even quicker later on as you have to deal with these nasty homing missiles.

Another fairly unimpressive aspect of the game is the intro. It tells the story accurately enough but, as there's no animation, it's really nothing more than a slideshow with an accompanying soundtrack. The only bit of movement you do get is just before you enter the game proper. You're shown your bloke legging it into the helicopter on his aircraft carrier base and taking to the skies.





The helicopter is controlled in an Asteroids kind of way. Rotate left and right using the joystick and accelerate or slow down by pulling forwards or backwards. There are a limited amount of bombs at your disposal, which can be sent forth using the keyboard or by pulling back and pressing Fire. These explosives usually take out any target with one direct hit.



The sight is useful in more ways than one. Firstly, it always appears in front of the chopper so you can easily tell which way you're heading (after all, if it wasn't there would you be able to spot which is the front of the helicopter in the picture above?) and secondly, the arrow inside indicates where the next hostage is situated or, if surrounded by a square, the whereabouts of the aircraft carrier.



You can't just hover over the hostages and immediately expect to enter the sub-game. Oh no, you need to stay in their vicinity for a certain amount of time before the game will allow you to do that. A large square appears which begins to decrease in size until it becomes as small as your copter. Successfully stay alive for the time it takes for this to happen and you'll be given the chance to pick up the poor fellows.

THE VERDICT

Firehawk's major stumbling block is its graphics. They're not that badly drawn but when the action gets hot the scenery soon becomes a mess as everything seems to blend together, making it hard to spot exactly what's firing at you. And as they're only 2D it's hard to know what can and can't be flown over, meaning that you sometimes lose shield points through not much fault of your own. It's not often that you'll find me complaining about a game moving too fast but an option to slow Firehawk down somewhat would have been welcome as you'd be able to plan your attack more strategically. The hostage rescue sub-game is a nice idea but unfortunately it doesn't work too well because of the way it's designed. Waiting for the hapless fellows to make their way towards the descended winch can become frustrating - in real life the blokes would be desperate to climb aboard the chopper and not spend half their time wandering from side to side. The game can rapidly become boring as it doesn't really introduce enough new elements later on to persuade gamers to continue - a password system would have been an idea here. Firehawk suffers badly from being released a couple of months after Amiga owners have had a chance to experience the sheer excellence of Desert Strike. The CodeMasters' game isn't really that bad but when you consider it's possible to increase your enjoyment factor several hundred percent by shelling out an extra fifteen quid for EA's stunning arcade game then you'll soon realise that perhaps that's the more sensible option.

Publisher Codemasters
Developer: In-house

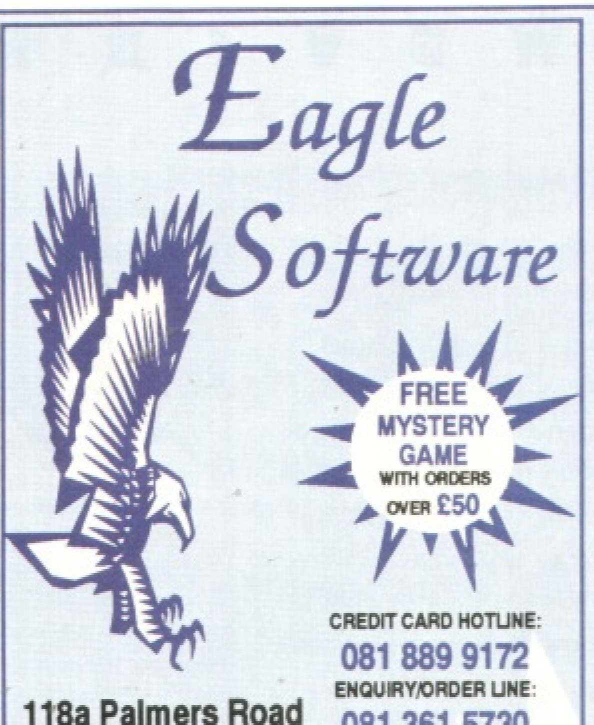
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Joystick/ Keyboard

MEMORY	DISKS
512K	1

GRAPHICS	55%
SOUND	58%
PLAYABILITY	56%
LASTABILITY	58%
OVERALL	59%

A1200 You need to fiddle with the boot options to get Firehawk to run on the A1200. Another reason to buy Desert Strike, don't you think?



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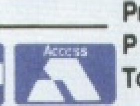
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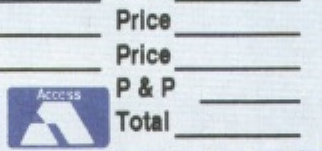
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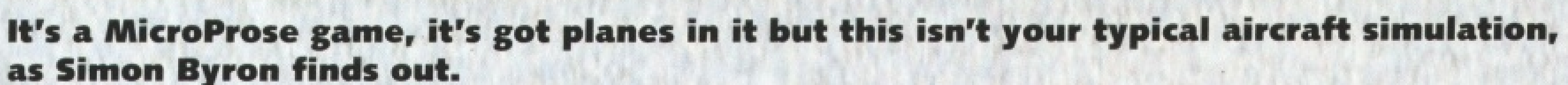




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THE ANCIENT ART OF WAR IN THE SKIES





It's a *MicroProse* game, it's got planes in it but this isn't your typical aircraft simulation, as Simon Byron finds out.

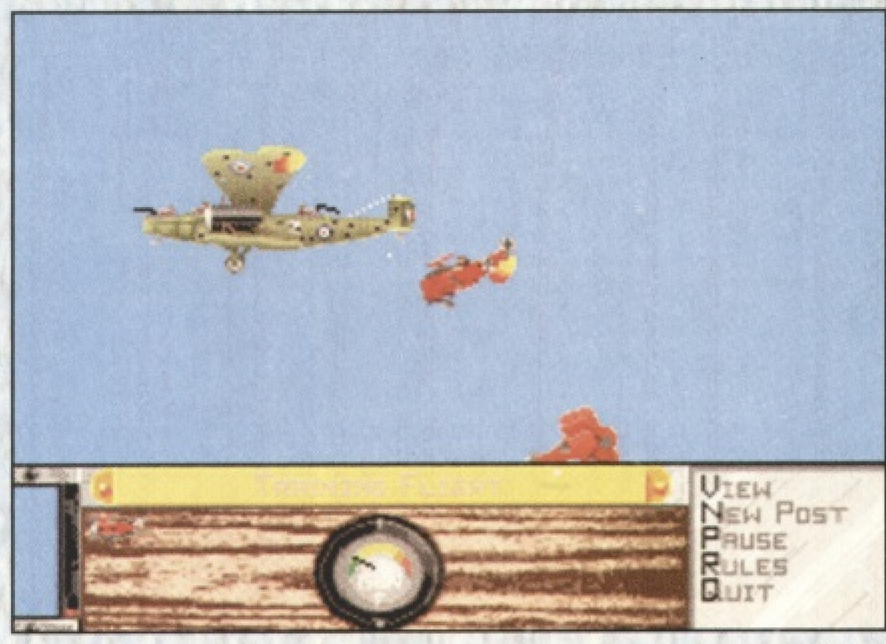
Frankly I find the tale behind The Ancient Art Of War book a little hard to believe. Apparently, some old bloke dubiously called Sun Tzu wrote this novel 2500 years ago (presumably on stone tablets or something) in which he listed a series of tactics and strategic manoeuvres which he believed military commanders should use when involved in a conflict.

Fair enough, you may think, but whoever wrote the manual to this game reckons that everyone from Genghis Kahn to Stormin' Norman Schwarz-a-what's-his-damn-name thoroughly studied Tzu's text. So where in this book was a chapter on 'How to gain air superiority', 'What to do when threatened by biological weapons' and 'How to drop bombs on allied tanks', then? Nowhere, that's where.

Enough of this, let's overlook the blatant lies and talk about the game itself. In it, you get to play a series of battles set in different locations during the First World War, the idea being to defeat your opponent by pushing back the battle-lines, blowing up all his aircraft or capturing his capital.

The major difference between this and all the other wargames is the inclusion of two arcade sections. Whenever a dogfight or a bombing run is taking place, you can jump straight into the heart of the action and control the planes in a hands-on kind of way. If you prefer to concentrate on the strategic aspect of the battle or are just crap at arcade games then you can let the computer control these bits and work out the outcome itself.

There's even a comprehensive campaign editor which allows you to construct your own battlegrounds so if you complete all the ones supplied or find them too tough then you can create a war which is as easy or as hard as you like. Sounds good, yes? Let's see...

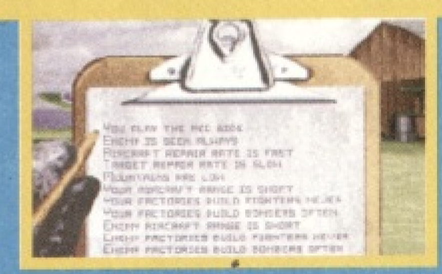


When two opposing squadrons of planes encounter each other then you'll have the choice to jump into one of the planes and take part in the ensuing dogfight. This is one of the game's arcade-y sections and takes the form of a simple shoot-'em-up in which you have to down as many enemy aircraft as possible before they do the same to you. Once a plane gets on your tail, it's hard to shake them off but the good news is that you can't crash into each other.



If you want to play a campaign, you'll need to pick one from the forty-plus supplied. Just move the pencil to the battle of your choice and press the left mouse button.

Before you start blowing things up, it's worth reading the little story which tells you about the background of the battle and why you're involved.

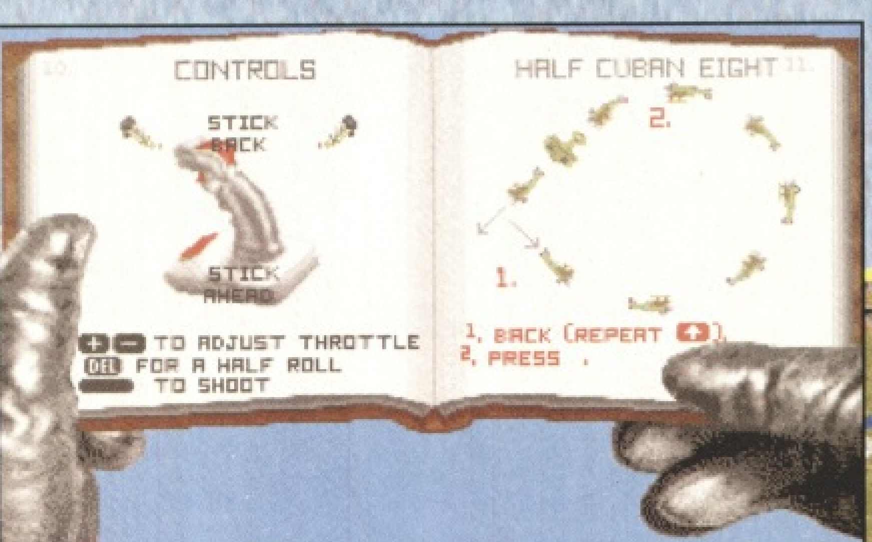


If reading the story has left you a little scared then pay a visit to the Change Rules screen and make things easy for yourself.



Now's the time to pick a character to fight against (see separate box) and also decide what heroic commander you want to be.

(Below) If you have decided to train yourself up in the either dogfighting or bombing sections then the game presents you with this invaluable instructions screen which contains a pictorial representation of the joystick commands as well as helpful combat tactics. So if you've ever fancied doing a Half Cuban Eight (and, let's face it, who hasn't?) then all the information you need is available here.

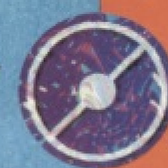


LAND OF CONFUSION

Here's a map of one of the easier battles, entitled somewhat aptly as 'Land of Confusion'. The twisty, turny front makes working out which side you're controlling a bit tough and as you start off with slightly less planes than the other side (if you're playing as the Allied force, that is) you can see that this is a war which won't be over in a matter of minutes

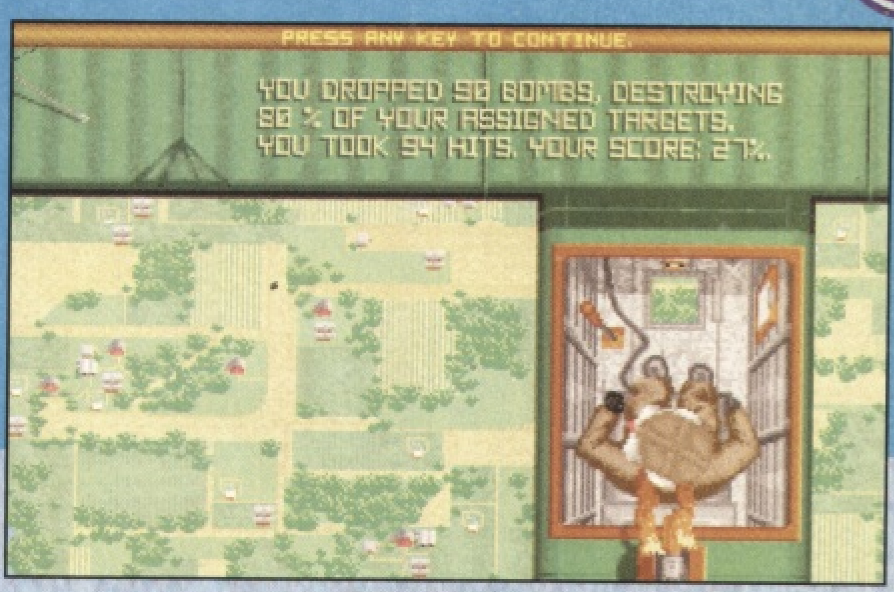
If you want to send some of your planes on a mission then click over the airport with the mouse and you'll be able to choose which of your fighters you want to send into battle.

You can also specify what formation you want the squadron to fly in and whether they are to perform a single bombing run or hang around until the target is destroyed. After all this has been decided, just set the flight path and off they go.





Finally, pay attention to this information. It's a miniaturised map of the battleground which plots the location of the enemy positions. You're now ready to enter the...

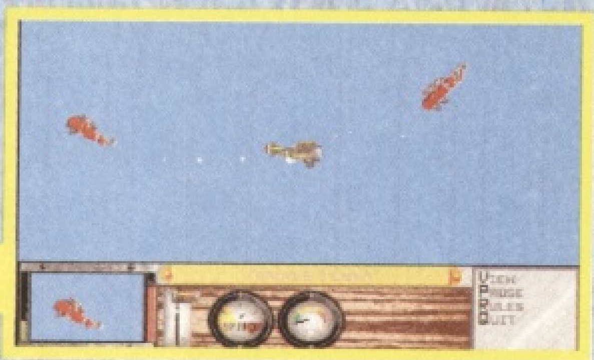


Ancient Art has its very own self-contained Proficiency Test built in. There's no bike riding or highway code tests involved, it's much more fun than that. You're given a number of specified targets and the idea is to destroy them all with the minimum amount of bombs. At the end of the mission you're marked on accuracy, efficiency, completeness, navigation and tactics.



Before you start a bombing run, you need to choose a bomber to control (if there are more than one) and then decide from which direction you'll approach the target area, the ideal route being one which avoids the anti-aircraft guns while at the same time swooping over the buildings which need to be destroyed.

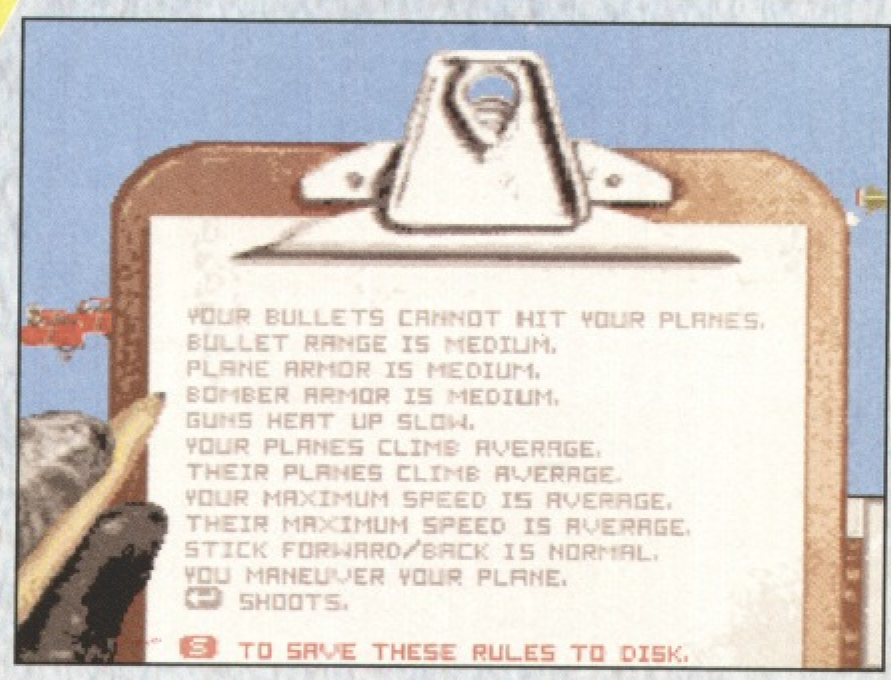




No two dogfights are lever the same. You can never tell which enemy pilots are waiting to take you on or how many fighters are going to be shooting at you when you commence battle. You can attempt to run away but if an enemy is close to the edge of the screen then you're likely to be shot down.



You control the direction of the bomber by moving the line on the edge of the bomb doors to face where you want to go. Each plane only carries twenty five bombs, so you need to be pretty accurate if you want to destroy everything you're meant to.



Dogfighting may be many things but it certainly isn't easy - although it can be. By pressing 'R' you can call up this comprehensive set of rules and alter them so that you stand a greater chance of victory. You can change the range of your bullets, the rate at which you climb and the amount of armour your plane has so that it takes more hits before you are sent plummeting earth-wards.

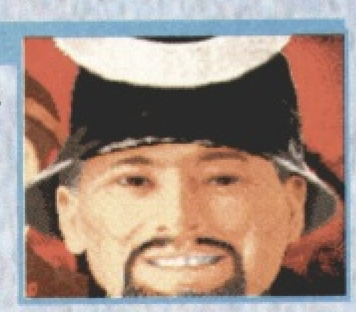


R E V I E W

BOO!

You can fight against one of the five geezers shown here and each has their own unique style and method of attacking. Some are more subtle than others, choosing to take out your supplies rather than your airfields, so knowing who's who can be very advantageous...

TZU



This Chinese bloke lived 2500 years ago in the Kingdom of Wu but has been resurrected especially so that he can give you a good kicking. He's the author of The Art of War so, as you can imagine, he's a formidable opponent. Once his front starts advancing you'll be in big trouble and it's best if you keep some fighters handy to defend your capital, should he try and attack it.

LORD KITCHENER

He may have a crap name but Mr Kitchener is an Englishman with a very strict plan of action. He'll attack your airbases first and then move onto your industrial complexes. You'll inflict the most psychological damage if you manage to destroy his supply depots as they provide a great deal of strategic value to him.

FOCH



Whatever you do, don't mention this Frenchman's name in front of your granny as she's likely to try and wash your mouth out with soap. He'll protect his capital with great force so it's advisable not to try and destroy it directly. The best tactic is to to bomb his strongest targets and advance the front.

WILHELM II

Sequels aren't usually as good as the original so I'd hate to know what Wilhelm number one was like - his son is bad enough. He'll concentrate on advancing the front which leaves his flanks weak. The best thing you can do is stop him pushing forward otherwise you'll soon discover that you've got no territory left.

SPIKE

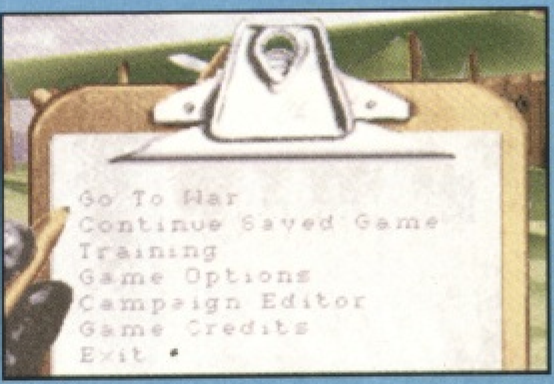


As you can tell from the way he looks, Spike is completely bonkers. This doesn't make him a pushover, though, as his erratic style can often result in some thoroughly nasty attacks. For some reason he'll attempt to blow up all your bridges whilst randomly striking out at any of your targets he feels like having a pop at.



To add a certain degree of authenticity your guns heat up with continued use so if you hold your finger on the firebutton for a long time you'll soon notice that your plane changes into this jammed icon. The only way to restore normal service is to lay off the trigger until the gun temperature falls down to its usual level. Of course, this makes the task of destroying the rest of the planes that much harder.





This is the first thing you'll come across in the game and from here you can change any of the game's features, continue a saved game or even design your own mini-war! If you're feeling confident then you can opt to begin the carnage straight away but it's advisable to experience a few combat situations before you enter a full-blown campaign.

THE VERDICT

Although the idea behind Ancient Art is a good one, long delays hamper the game's enjoyment. The four disks need to be swapped with frightening regularity so single drive owners are in for a hard and frustrating time. There are loads of what seem to be unnecessary delays all the time - things like having to wait for the pencil graphic to be loaded every time you call up an option screen is just ridiculous. You would have thought that something as frequently displayed as that would be retained in memory, especially on the A1200, but sadly not. That said, though, Ancient Art is one of the most accessible strategy games I've come across. The arcade sections are fun to play and because strategy purists can opt not to play these if they're a little too 'modern' for them, the overall gameplay should appeal to most people. If you've never played strategy games before then this is a good one to try, as it's not too complex or involving and you pretty much know what's going on all of the time, something which cannot be said about most wargames. At the end of the day, you've got to remember that this type of game doesn't usually race along at a high speed, so if you enjoy and play these games anyway you're not likely to be surprised. It's just a shame that the lack of pace is likely to put some people off, as there's a cracking game underneath.



A1200

Hooray! Ancient Art moves faster on the A1200, which makes the game far more enjoyable. As I've said above, it's a pity that additional data isn't loaded into memory before you start playing, which would have cut out a few of the delays and moved things along quicker. We can't expect miracles at this relatively early stage in the life of the A1200, but it's something worth bearing in mind, software houses. Anyway, I'd give Ancient Art 80% if you're playing it on a turbo-charged Amiga.

ENTITY

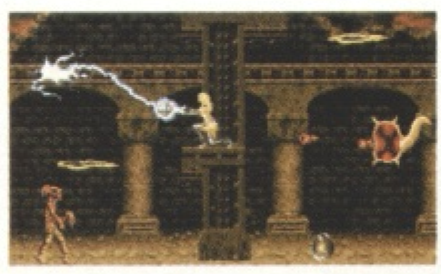
David Upchurch gets hot under the collar as he reviews Loriciel's saucy shoot-'em-up.



Initially Anthemis starts her adventure armed with feeble one-shot fireballs. Find a power-up, however, and she can fire horizontally and diagonally upwards. A third power-up and she's able to scatter magical fireballs all over the shop. You can also angle her fire to shoot diagonally up but not down, which is annoying as many of the smaller monsters lie low to the ground and so have to be avoided rather than blown up.



Here she is boys - Anthemis in all her glory, wearing little more than a frown. Quite what a feminist would make of all this I don't know but - hey! - we've had plenty of blokes running around scrolly slash-'em-ups wearing nothing but a furry codpiece to cover up their embarassment so it's only fair. It's equality. Or something.



One of the best power-ups to find is the Lightning. As the name implies it causes shards of lightning to emanate from Anthemis's hands, the big attraction being that these shards will home in on any baddies in the vicinity.



Anthemis is an athletic sort. As well as being able to run, jump and shoot fireballs from her hands she can climb up and down sheer mountain rock faces. The only drawback to such mountaineering activities is that she can't use her weapons.

There was a bit of a ker-fuffle when Entity turned up for review in the post (wrapped in plain brown paper, naturally). In fact, a fight nearly broke out as Simon and I fought over who would get to review it. It wasn't the promise of Entity's gameplay that was getting us all worked up (chance would be a fine thing) but the fact that the game's hero or rather heroine is a lurvely lady. Being rather sad, lonely and pathetic lads, even the hint of a female gets us feverishly foaming at the mouth and knowing what those Frenchies are like we were expecting big things - if you know what I mean.

As the battle raged on Simon got so over-excited he had to go home and have a cold bath - at least, I think that's what he said. I, being older and having a more mature approach to life, simply stuck pins in my hand until I'd calmed down, thus leaving me the only person left in the office able to review it. And now, if truth be told, in a lot of ways I wish I wasn't.

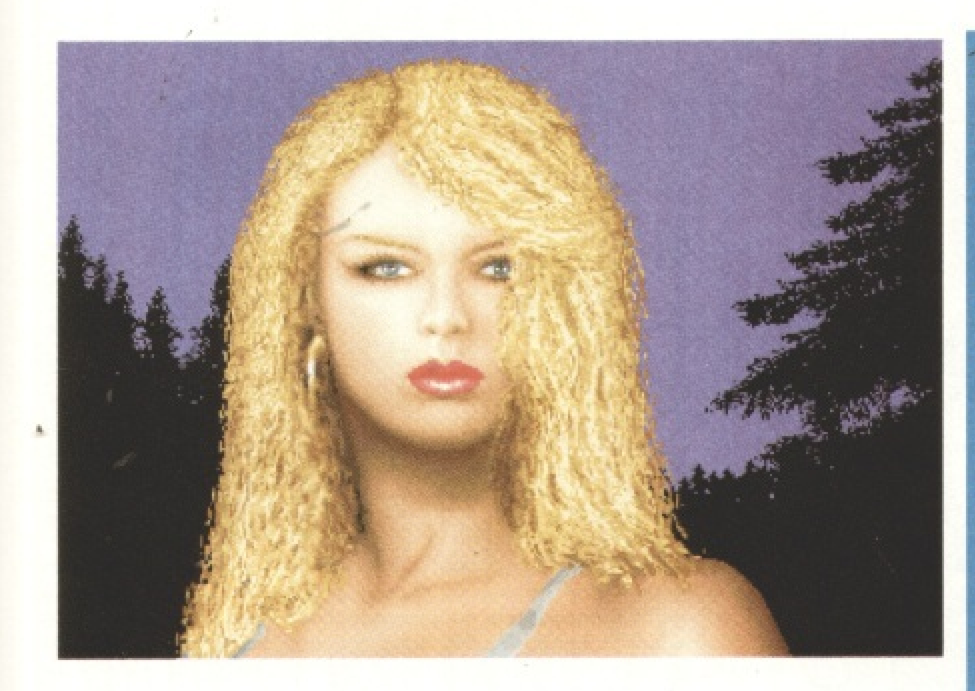
Oh, don't get me wrong. On the sauce front it's much as I'd hoped. There's a drool-inducing intro, explaining of how the evil Entity has escaped from its prison and how the unnaturally well-endowed Anthemis (Phwoar! Gorblimey! Gumph! Etc!) is plucked from our world, has a skimpy little black number spray-painted on and is turned into an Amazon-like warrior, blessed with fireball-casting hands. But once that simple pleasure out of the way we're into the game and... well...

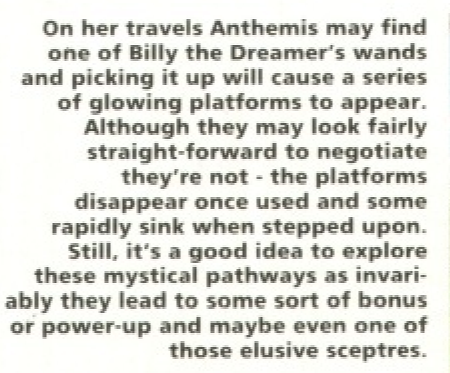
Entity is basically a by-the-numbers platform shoot-'em-up. Anthemis has to run and jump around the scrolling landscapes, zapping monsters and collecting power-ups, in the search for three magical sceptres which will open a dimensional gate to the next level and closer to a final encounter with the Entity. It's the sort of thing you've seen a hundred times before and will no doubt see a hundred times again. Anyway, in case you're new to all this, here we go...



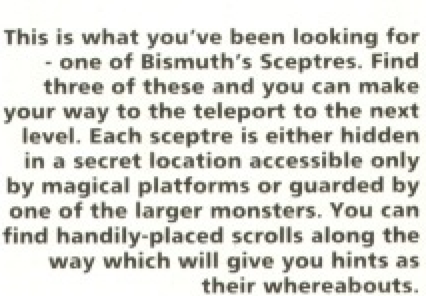
Reach the end of the first level and you'll have to face this brute. The end-of-nasties are brilliant throughout with some impressive animation on display, especially on this Tyrannosaurus Rex. The process of defeating them is slightly less inspired, however - simply fill 'em full of fireballs while dodging their return shots. Ho-hum.



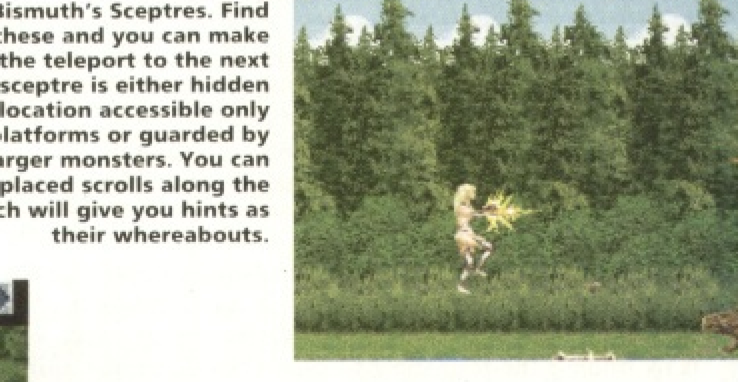




On her travels Anthemis may find one of Billy the Dreamer's wands and picking it up will cause a series of glowing platforms to appear. Although they may look fairly straight-forward to negotiate they're not - the platforms disappear once used and some rapidly sink when stepped upon. Still, it's a good idea to explore these mystical pathways as invariably they lead to some sort of bonus or power-up and maybe even one of those elusive sceptres.



This is what you've been looking for - one of Bismuth's Sceptres. Find three of these and you can make your way to the teleport to the next level. Each sceptre is either hidden in a secret location accessible only by magical platforms or guarded by one of the larger monsters. You can find handily-placed scrolls along the way which will give you hints as their whereabouts.







Much of Entity is spent hopping from platform to platform. The control over Anthemis's jumping could be more precise as it's very easy to slip off a platform when you didn't intend to, which is very annoying over lethal water areas.



THE VERDICT

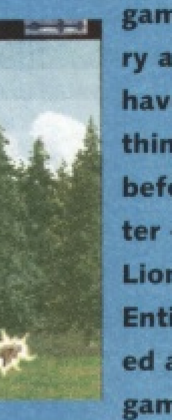
It has to be said that the biggest boob in Entity is that somebody at Loriciel actually thought we needed another mediocre run-n'-shoot-'em-up. The game feels like it was written by someone with a checklist: Okay, have you put in some power-ups? Yup! End-of-level monsters? Yup! Secret bonus rooms? Yup! Do we need anything else? Nah, that should do it! Don't get me wrong - Entity's all put together competently enough but the gameplay is sooooo dreary and boring. You really have seen this sort of thing a hundred times before and a lot, lot better - the superb Lionheart, for example. If Entity looked and sounded as good as Thalion's game then it might have faired a bit better, but the pixelly backgrounds are coloured in varying exciting shades of drab while the sound effects consist mainly of squeaks from the monsters and strange warbles when you collect a power-up. Entity's only real plus is its end-of-level meanies. These are really something rather special, being big, well-animated and actually quite scary, especially the big T. Rex that rounds off the first level. But whatever you do don't let them encourage you to buy the game, as there's a lot of tedious so-called 'action' to endure before you reach them. It takes a lot more than mammoth mammary glands to make you stand out in a genre as crowded as this, as Entity shows.

Publisher: Loriciel
Developer: In-house

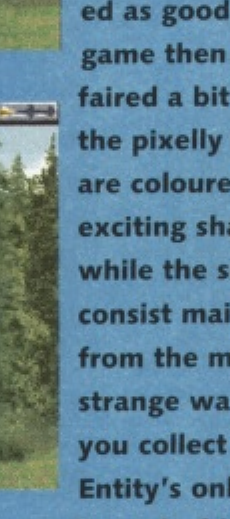
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joystick

MEMORY 512K | DISKS 4



GRAPHICS 57%



SOUND 40%

PLAYABILITY 58%



LASTABILITY 76%

OVERALL 52%



A1200

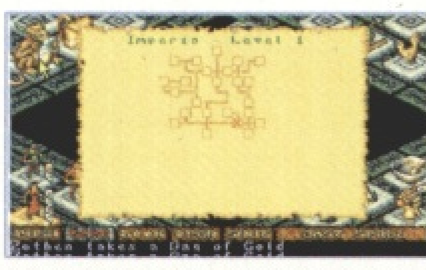
Lush 256-colour backdrops, super-smooth five-layer parallax and 2Mb of sampled sound are just some of the things you WON'T find in Entity on the A1200. The game IS fully compatible, though.

"Oh no, not another RPG," grumbles David 'Misery' Upchurch. "Hang on, though, this is one's not half bad..."

WORLDS OF LEGEND
Son Of The Empire



Your party is limited to four members, one from each of the four character classes. However, this screen allows you to alter certain limited aspects of each character. A character's statistics (health, strength, intelligence, etc) define how well they perform in their class, i.e. a Runemaster needs a high intelligence to cast spells well, and you can raise some of these stats slightly at the detriment of others.



In the top-left corner of the screen you can see a dragon scribbling away on a scrap of parchment. This is Elliot and he performs two very useful functions. If the party are down a dungeon then clicking on Elliot will bring up a map of the current level, showing rooms visited so far with the party's location shown by a red cross. Very handy. If the party are attacked in the wilderness, however, then clicking on Elliot will allow the party to flee. All-in-all Elliot is one very friendly dragon.

(Below) Combat is as easy to control as the moving around - just click on the sword icon in the bottom-right of the screen and the party will attack any nasties in the vicinity. You can then either let them get on with it or intervene on a character's behalf and give them new orders.

RPGs are the dirty mags of the computer games world. Everybody sneers at them but they sell like the proverbial hot cakes so somebody's got to be buying them. I'll bet there are quite a few Amiga gamers who brag to their mates about how they'd much rather play Project-X or Zool than some crummy RPG and then, when they're alone in their bedroom behind a locked door, pull out a secret copy of Ultima VI from under their mattress and sneakily load it up.

Or a copy of Legend, for that matter. Legend took a lot of people by surprise when it was released around abouts the middle of last year. It had had very little fanfare of pre-launch hype, yet it turned out to be one of the most exciting and innovative RPGs in a long time.

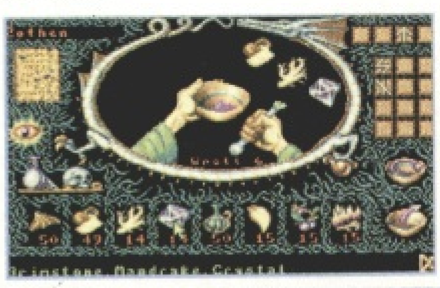
And now we've got Worlds Of Legend, sub-titled Son Of The Empire. It's not really so much Legend 2 as Legend V1.1. You see, the gameplaying engine itself hasn't been changed much (or at all, actually) but the scenario is all new. The party of four adventurers - a Berserker, Assassin, Runemaster and Troubadour (I'll not embarrass myself by giving you their names, as they're all of the 'Thringelgorr the Mighty' variety) - are summoned to the Empire of the Moon in the Far East, where there's big trouble a-foot, to put it mildly.

You see, the Emperor has been killed, murdered by his former aid Ti-Mann MoChun. And as the Emperor was the Assassin's father, this has become something of a personal matter. The only way to defeat the fiend is by finding the four shards of the Eternal Amulet and summoning the Eternal Champion. Are you up to the task? We'll see...

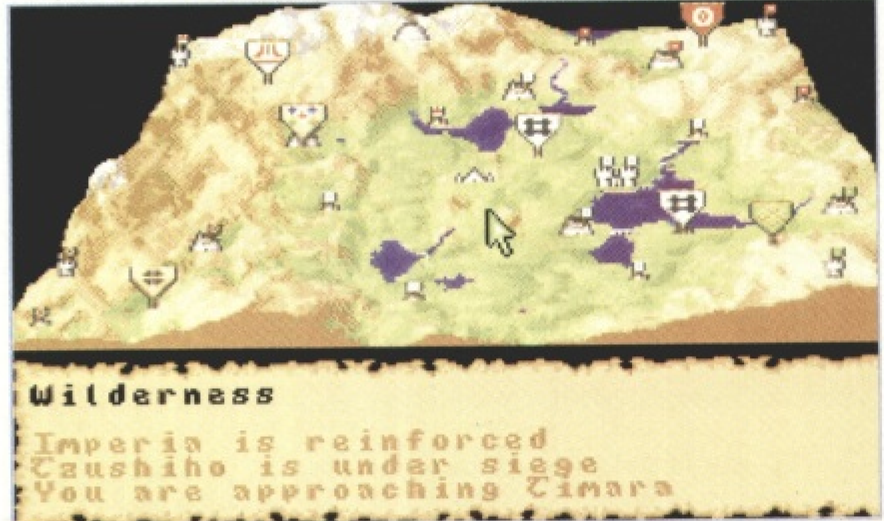




While travelling around the Empire it's likely that sooner or later your party will be beset by roaming brigands or monsters. These surprise attacks take place much like fights in dungeons on an isometric-3D landscape. Fights in the wilderness are generally much tougher than those you'll find in the city dungeons so it's best not to venture across country until your party's well-equipped.



The spell system is one of the game's most interesting aspects. Actually casting them isn't too novel - you simply bring up the spell list and click on the one you want - it's how you add spells to this list that's interesting. Spells are created by mixing certain ingredients while invoking runes. It's such a flexible system that you can design an almost infinite number of unique, home-made spells.



The adventurers' quest takes them all over the Empire, and their progress is depicted on this attractive map. Since the Emperor's death it has been a dark time for the realm, with many factions rising up to try and take control of the empty throne. The troops of these opposing forces are represented by banners of various designs and it's best to try and avoid them as they travel from town to town unless you fancy a fight.



This is Ti-Mann MoChun, the man who killed the Emperor. As you can see he's rather dismissive of your attempts at revenge. As you travel around you'll meet many people who'll either try to help or hinder you. They'll either engage you in simple conversation (you can't actually ask questions, the character will just give you information) or offer you goods to buy. Some characters, on the other hand, will simply attack you.



To move a character you simply highlight their plinth in the bottom-left of the screen and then click on where you want them to go. If a character is moved to the exit the rest of party will follow, avoiding much tedious moving all the characters one by one.

THE VERDICT

Worlds Of Legend is top stuff and no mistaking. The control over your party of four adventurers as they explore the dungeons is brilliantly thought out - it may look complex from the screenshots but believe me you'll get the hang of it in no time. The ease of the control system makes the monster bashing particularly exciting which is not, surprisingly, always the case with RPGs. The puzzles are clever but not too mind-bending, acting as a nice complement to the action rather than halting it. On top of that the plot is engrossing too, pulling you into the adventure and holding you there. Although I'm not too keen on the graphic style used on the still graphics - they're a bit too grainy and drab-looking for my liking - they're brilliant in the dungeons, and you'll soon build quite a strong attachment to the wonderfully-animated little figures. Trouble is, all these comments apply equally as well to the original Legend, now available on the Mindscape Classics budget label. If you've never tried out the Legend game system before - and you really should, because it's excellent - then I have to say you'd be wiser trying it out on budget first and then, assuming you like it, getting this afterwards. Legend devotees, however, will need no encouragement to rush out and get this as soon as poss, and very sensible of them too. One day all RPGs will be made this way...



A1200 — Worlds Of Legend works fine on the A1200 with no problems. There are no really obvious improvements.

WORLDS OF LEGEND

This is a map of one of the shorter Outside levels which only scrolls horizontally. It's not too hard to complete, as you can see.

Collecting coins doesn't just increase your score. For every 25 coins Woody collects, your energy is increase by one bar

These shell-type creatures only fire when you near them

Platforms can either be safe or contain deadly pop-up spikes but, to make matters worse, this one moves

No matter how hot it gets, never ever be tempted to strip off and take a dip - water is fatal to Woody

WOODY'S W

Stand by for more platforming action as Simon Byron checks out Global Software's latest release. But Woody buy it?



Like a certain other game which we'd rather not care to mention there's a map screen which pops up between levels. From here it is possible to select which route you want to take and the available stages are shown by a question mark. As more and more levels are completed, Woody's choice of stages is greatly increased until - yes! - you can finally access the seventh castle. Pressing Escape on this screen calls up an options menu where you can enter any level codes you happen to obtain.



Hello, we've seen this sort of thing before. Oh yes, it's the familiar bonus blocks as pioneered by that plumber bloke. As if you hadn't guessed, knocking the underneath of these squares with your head will increase your score and sometimes reveal a valuable power-up. You need to think carefully before bashing these blocks away as once knocked they disappear, meaning that Woody can't use them as stepping stones.

After exploring the level as best he can, Woody comes across this combination lock-type thing. The individual squares act identically to bonus blocks but instead of revealing power-ups, they simply change to show another shape. It's a sure bet that these have something to do with the lack of exit, but how on earth do you crack the code?

Woodya believe it? (You can stop that right now - Ed.) The magical crystal has disappeared and without it the king of Woody's World will not be able to regain power from the evil forces who have overthrown him. And as is usual for people in power, the king has decided that someone else has got to venture forth and retrieve the stone so that the regal ruler can concentrate on driving around in a huge car and waving at people a lot.

Woody is the one who has been selected for the job. Armed with nothing more than an ancient scroll containing a map of the kingdom and a head full of crazy heroic notions, the young elf has to leap forth into uncharted territories and locate the crystal. The map depicts the six castles which form the kingdom but there is rumoured to be a seventh and it's that fortress which is the odds-on favourite location of the powerful crystal.

Starting off at the Steam Castle, Woody's task is to find a certain amount of chests within each level and make his way to the exit door. Of course, it's not as easy as it sounds because everywhere that Woody visits has been taken over by a number of obviously Mario- and Sonic-inspired meanies and lethal traps.

Woody's World is the first full-price release from Vision Software, the team behind the excellent Cybernetix (as if you didn't know). But has the transition from Shareware to commercial game been a smooth one? You know where to look.

COLLECT NOW FOR POWER-UP

There are three 'states' Woody can be in, depending on what items he manages to collect. I know you're all just gagging to know what they are so below you'll find some handy descriptions, just for you.

NORMAL

Sporting a lovely blue number, Woody can run about, jump and... that's about it, really. Compared to the other two, the normal state is the equivalent of a barbed-wire handkerchief - not very good for nosebleeds. (Pardon? -Ed.)

PRINCE

Ah-ha! Collect a Sceptre and as if by magic you'll be wearing a dazzling green robe and a Tupperware-inspired hat. Prince Woody can kick enemies and also jump slightly further than normal, meaning that you don't have to use as much care when leaping across huge voids.

KING

Completely brilliant! The King is the hardest of all. Like Wonder Woman he can leap tall buildings in a single bound. (That's Superman, actually - Ed.) Oh, okay, he can jump quite far and also shoot stars at any enemies by pressing Fire. That way he doesn't get his Hush Puppies dirty, you see.

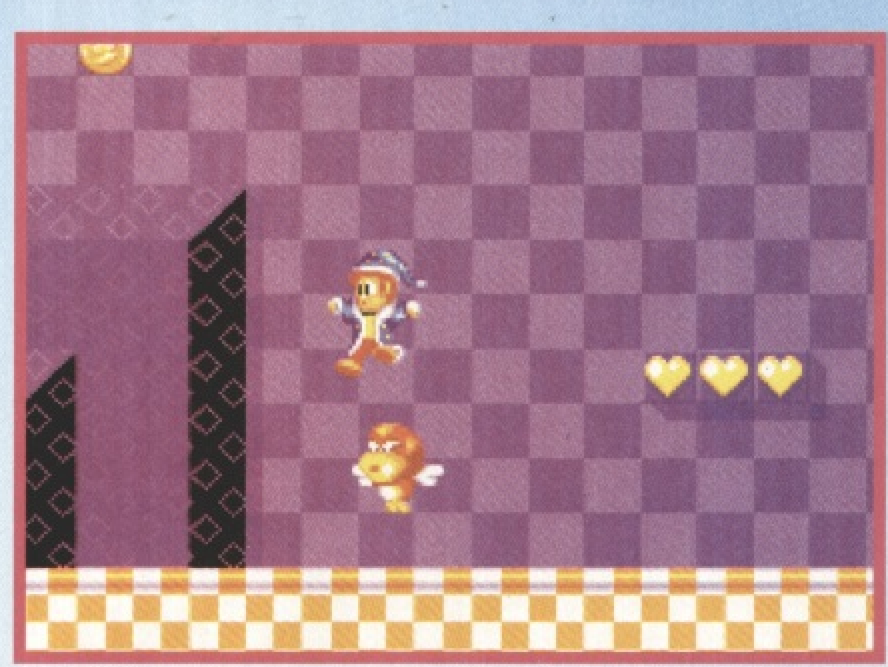


Don't hang around on these platforms for too long as they'll fall away if you apply too much weight

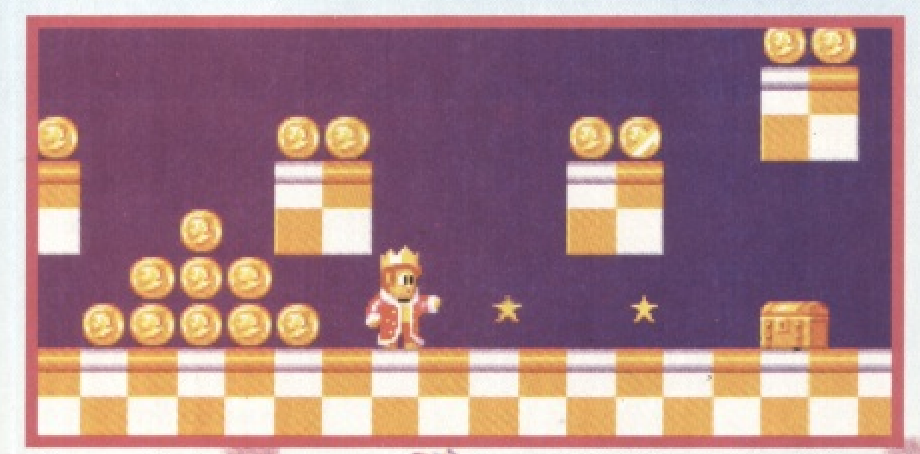
Some of the monsters have a small degree of intelligence. This 'un will speed up if you try to bash its head in

Here's where you leave this level by pulling down in front of the Exit door. Are there any more bonuses nearby, though?

ORLD



Most of the enemy creatures roaming the land can be destroyed by the now familiar method of jumping on their heads - something which eight out of ten platform games prefer, apparently. The ones to watch out for, though, are the deadly ghosts (not shown here because they're too scary) who constantly home in on the elf - one touch and you'll be a life down.



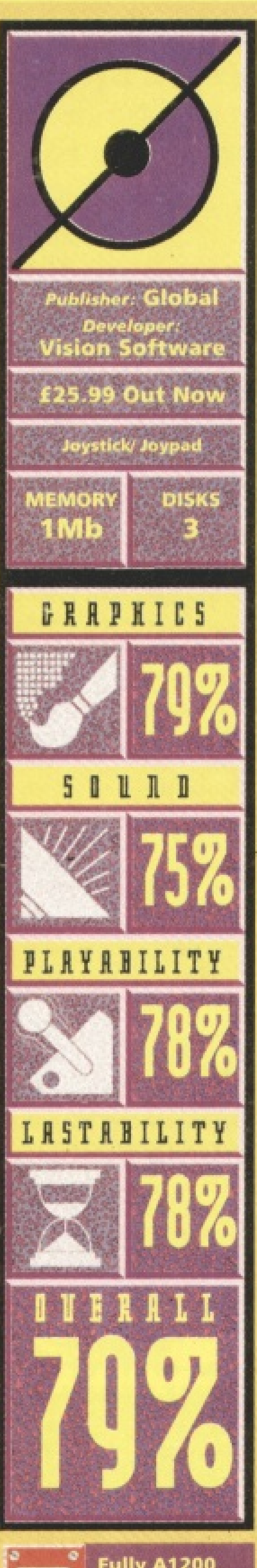
There are loads of bonus rooms to find, most of which contain squillions of coins, chests and power-ups. It can be advantageous to take time out and explore these rooms as there are often hidden areas which contain yet more points-awarding goodies. You'll also find several special Throne Rooms which can only be entered by King Woody.



At certain points throughout the game, Woody gets the chance to enter a fantastic bonus level. This takes the form of a manic roller-coaster train ride with the idea being to collect as many bonuses as possible. The good thing about this stage is the fact that no matter how wildly Woody leaps into the air, he'll always land safely on the train.

THE VERDICT

Although Woody's World is by no means a bad start to Vision Software's commercial career, you can't help thinking that the game is slightly lacking in most areas. The first thing that you'll notice is the empty feel to the levels. There aren't enough enemies milling around to present a major challenge so you can get quite far into the game after a few goes. It seems as if Vision have tried to gloss over this relative shortcoming by reincarnating any creatures who have been disposed of whenever you revisit an area you've previously cleared. This is annoying to say the least, and not at all fair. The levels are generally too short, with very little to tax the average gamer, save for the enthusiastic inertia bestowed upon Woody. In fact, the majority of lives lost are usually a direct result of losing control and falling into bottomless pits - which, as regular readers will know, is one of my pet hates. Apart from all that, Woody's World is fairly enjoyable. It doesn't come up with anything original but it's competently programmed and entertaining for a while. There are quite a few zones split into a total of sixty areas so the game is fairly large, something which should make up for the not-exactly-huge levels and the moderate ease with which you can complete them. Woody's World is by no means a classic game but when all's said and done it's quite good fun and ideally suited to younger gamers or anyone who can't keep up with the frantic modern platformer.



Publisher: Global
Developer: Vision Software
£25.99 Out Now
Joystick/ Joypad
MEMORY 1Mb
DISKS 3

GRAPHICS 79%
SOUND 75%
PLAYABILITY 78%
LASTABILITY 78%
OVERALL 79%

A1200
Fully A1200 compatible and there are no plans for an enhanced version.

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY CHALLENGE

Rugby has been called 'a game for animals, played by gentlemen', so that's why we made Dave 'The Beast' Upchurch review Domark's rugger sim...

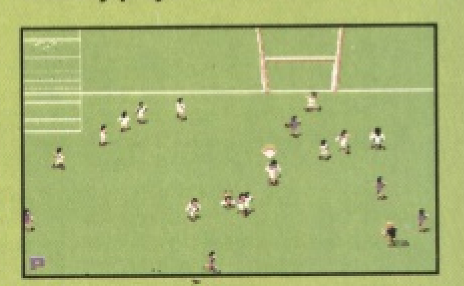
Ah, yes. Rugby. What golden memories of my schooldays that sport evokes... Freezing cold days with the chopped-up mud pitch as hard as steel... Getting my knees gobbed on in the scrum... Desperately trying to avoid ever getting the ball... Some idiot kicking the ball forward into my head... A big bloke wearing studded boots stamping on my legs... Dimly-seen faces looming above me saying "Is he still alive?"... Great days, great days. And now Domark have given me the chance to relive those classic moments from my past with International Rugby Challenge. At least this time I can play the game without fear of hospitilisation.

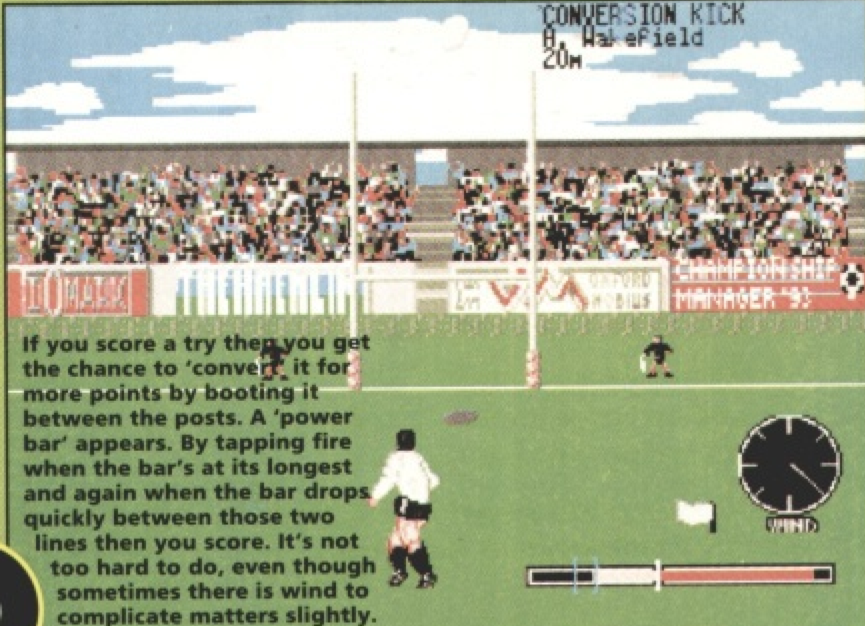
The action is viewed from a slightly tilted top-view which scrolls to follow the ball's movement, with the aim being to get the ball down the opposition's end of the pitch and over their try line. Like most sports sims you control the bloke nearest to the ball, and there are simple joystick manouevres allowing you to do all the tackling, passing and kicking that you'd expect from a rugby game.

Unlike Domark's first rugger game from a couple of years back, IRC allows you to play in either the Rugby World Cup or the Five Nations Championship and even go on tour with your team around the British Isles, Europe, Australasia and the Americas. On top of that you can invite a like-minded rugger fanatic around for some two-player fun. What more could you ask for? A good game, perhaps?

If the ball goes off the edge of the pitch (as it seems to do with alarming regularity) then the two teams line up for a throw in. These are dealt with using a similar power bar system to conversions. Here, however, the more welly you give the ball the further down the line it'll go,

Look at that red hot action! If you're not holding the ball a tap of fire will launch your nearest team member to the opposition player in possession into a tackle. If you've got the ball, however, a quick tap of fire will make you pass back to the nearest friendly player to the rear.

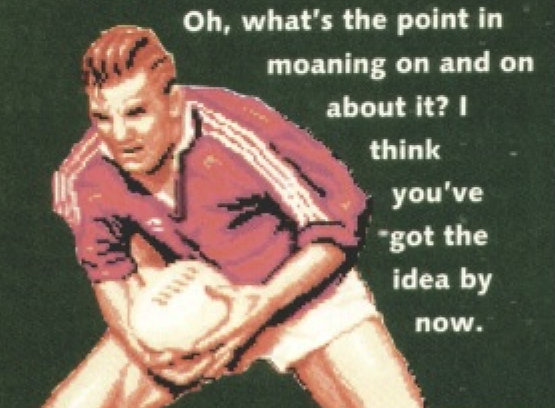


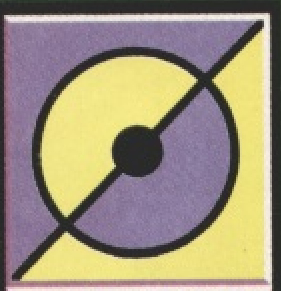


If you score a try then you get the chance to 'convert' it for more points by booting it between the posts. A 'power bar' appears. By tapping fire when the bar's at its longest and again when the bar drops quickly between those two lines then you score. It's not too hard to do, even though sometimes there is wind to complicate matters slightly.

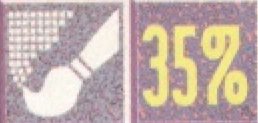
THE VERDICT

Our Simon, whinging young git that he is, often complains in these very pages that he gets all the crap games to review. But if ever there was a game that disproved his rather bitter and small-minded theory then International Rugby Challenge is it. I simply can't believe how bad it is. The most damning criticism of the game I can make is that it just doesn't feel like rugby at all, not even in spirit. I soon discovered after just a few minutes of play that a near failsafe method of scoring was to make whoever's got the ball run in a zig-zag up the pitch - the opposition can't do anything. But such one-man charges for glory are just not rugby. You can try passing but it's unlikely you'll find any of your computer-controlled fellow players in a convenient or useful position so why bother? I seem to remember similar criticisms being aimed at Domark's last rugger sim Rugby: The World Cup but at least that game had a modicum of playability. IRC, on the other hand, has none. The scrolling is jerky beyond belief and... Oh, what's the point in moaning on and on about it? I think you've got the idea by now.





Publisher: Domark
Developer: The Kremlin
£25.99 Out Now
Keyboard/Joystick/Mouse
MEMORY 1Mb | DISKS 1

GRAPHICS

35%

SOUND

31%

PLAYABILITY

42%

LASTABILITY

40%

OVERALL

37%

A1200 International Rugby Challenge is fully compatible with the A1200, unfortunately. There's some speed increase but nothing that makes the game any better

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THE LOST VIKINGS

Who's on for a bit of pillaging, then? David Upchurch joins Interplay's three Viking warriors for a spot of monster-bashin' and puzzle-solvin'...

Erik, Baleog and Olaf were not your typical Vikings. Whereas others of their rather violent culture enjoyed sailing across the North Sea on raids to foreign villages and towns, these boys preferred to spend their days hunting for food in the woods (and no doubt popping down to the boozer for a couple of jars of ale afterwards) before popping home to their devoted wives. Life was, as Erik comments during the game's intro, good.

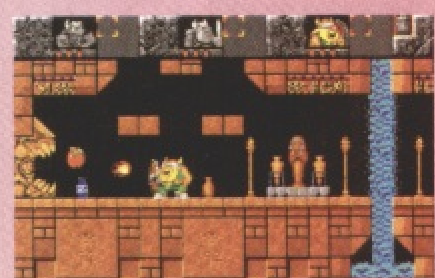
Then - disaster! One night, a giant alien spacecraft descended over their cluster of little huts and used a powerful tractor beam to pluck the still soundly-sleeping Norsemen from the comfort of their beds. The architect of this dastardly scheme was none other than Tomator, an alien big game hunter, who had decided that his collection of exotic creatures was lacking something small, irritable and bearded.

But Erik and the boys don't intend to spend the rest of their days sitting inside a cage. Oh no - no sooner have they awoken onboard the spaceship than they start to plan an escape back home. The fact that they haven't got a clue where they are doesn't slow them down at all. Thus begins the Saga Of The Lost Vikings...

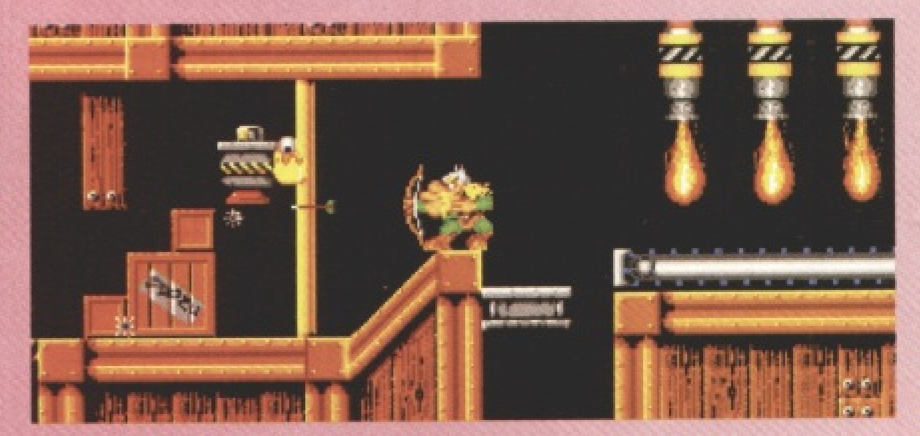
Interplay may not release much on the Amiga, but when they do you can bet it'll be something pretty special. It's good to report, then, that The Lost Vikings maintains that tradition. In a nutshell it's an arcade adventure spread over 37 self-contained levels. Using the three Vikings (each has their own specific skills) you have to solve puzzles, bash nasties and negotiate all kinds of platform-related troubles en route to the exit to the next level. Although The Lost Vikings may sound like the sort of thing you've seen a hundred times before, you've never seen it done quite like this. Here's why...



Erik the Swift is the nominal head of the group. He tends to get a bit ratty with Olaf and Baleog but you can hardly blame him - trying to control this lot would test anybody's leadership skills. Erik, as his nickname implies, is a bit nippy on his toes and is the only Viking able to jump. Not only that but he can also use his head to ram and demolish obstructing brick walls. Erik no doubt wishes they had Anadin Extra in Viking times.



Olaf the Stout is the gang's bumbling comedy figure but that's not to say he's useless. Far from it, in fact, because Olaf carries a sturdy shield which will protect the boys against anything from a glob of snake's venom to a firey lavaball. If Olaf raises the shield above his head it can be used as a stepping stone to help Erik reach the higher platforms and also as a make-shift hanglider.



Baleog the Fierce is the group's warrior, a real hard-nut armed with sword and bow. Obviously the sword's weakness is that Baleog has to get dangerously close to the monsters before he can use it, although there are some tougher meanies that can only be killed by it. The bow, on the other hand, can pick off most monsters at long range and can even be used to activate switches or levers.

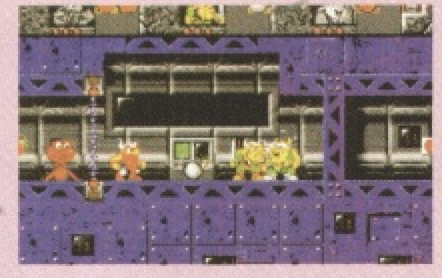
Which arcade adventure would be complete without some switches to fiddle with? The Lost Vikings is no exception. Fortunately the switches tend to be fairly close to the object they affect so there're none of those annoying 'So what on earth did that switch do?' problems. Instead, the puzzles tend to revolve more around finding ways to reach the switches, as you can see here.



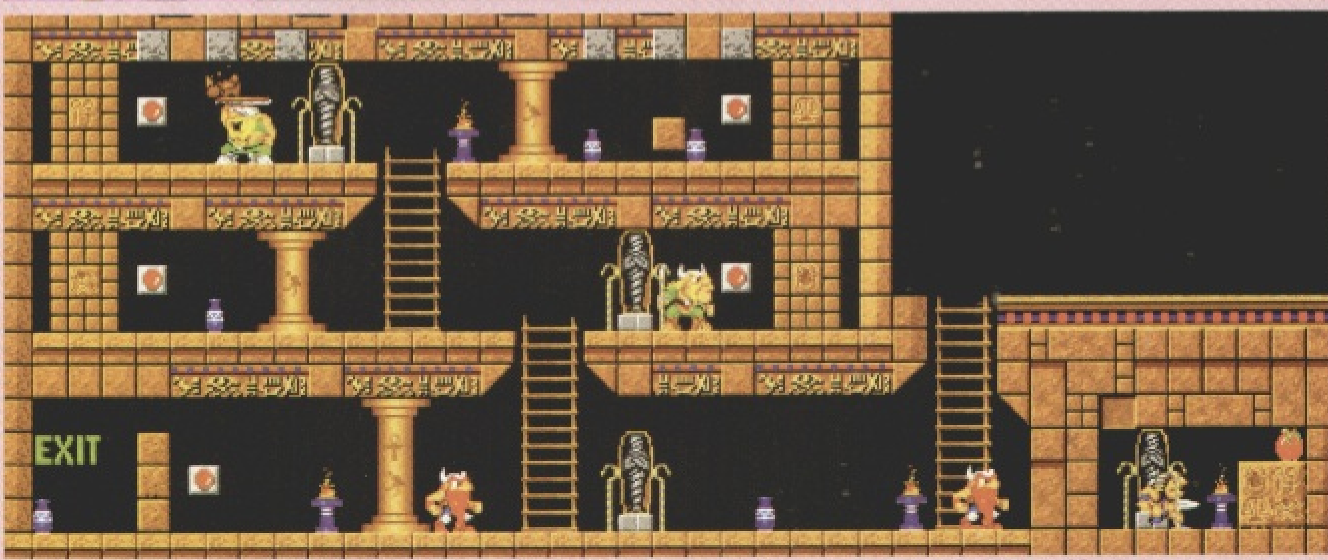
(Below) Each Viking can carry up to four items, which can be picked up by making a Viking walk over them. Some of the items are for instant use, such as energy-restoring food and smart bombs, while others have be used in certain locations, like the colour-coded keys for the door locks and the obstruction-destroying time bombs. If a Viking gets overloaded you can make him give items to one of his comrades, provided he's not too far away.



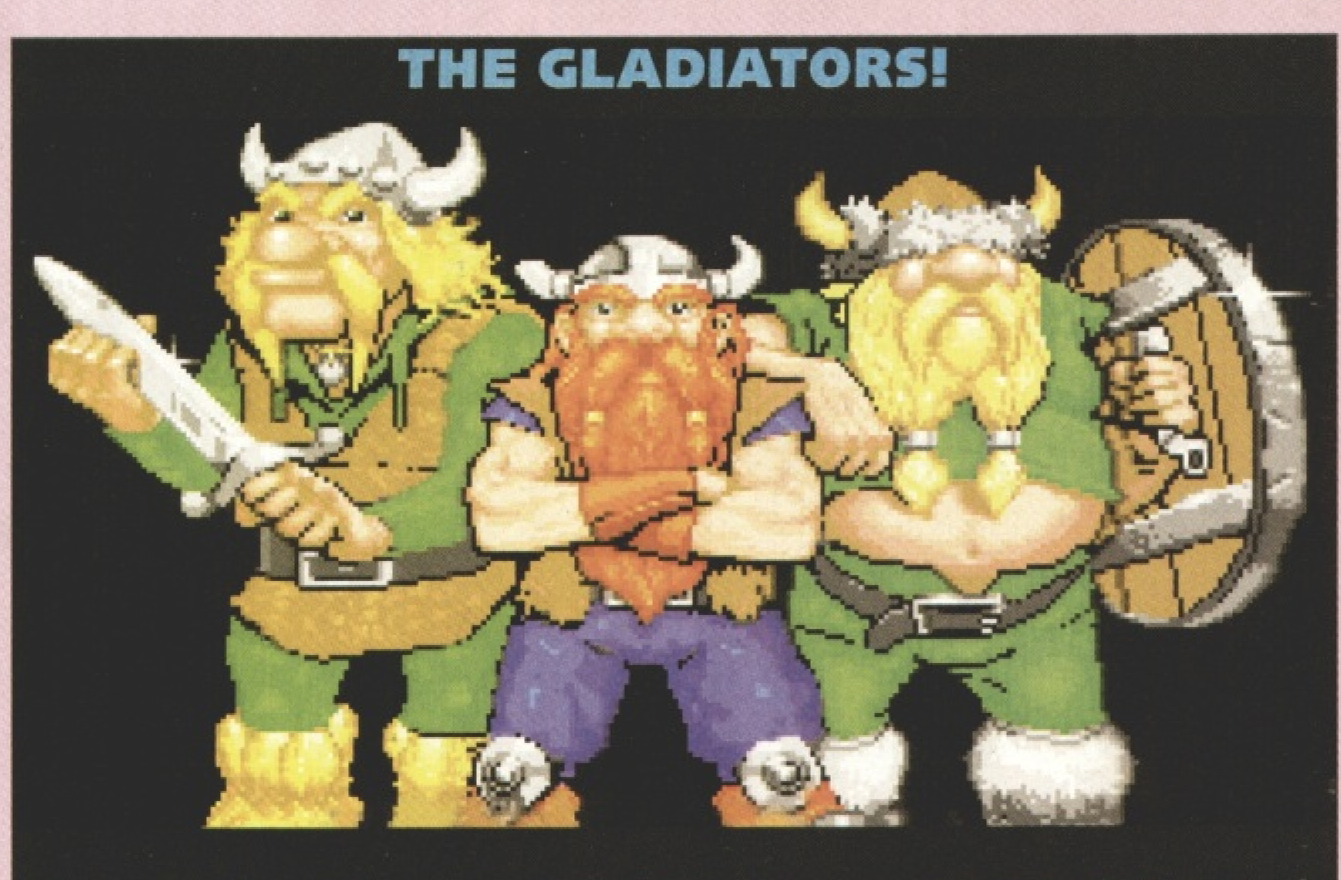
Every so often, mainly in the earlier levels of the game, the Vikings will meet a friendly face who they'll be able to talk to. Although you can't actually ask questions or anything as sophisticated as that - all that happens is that when you walk up to the character a series of speech bubbles appear - it's wise to pay attention to what they say as they can often give you very helpful tips about how to complete the level.



This puzzle is typical of the sort in The Lost Vikings. There's a wall blocking the exit and above are four blocks with symbols engraved on them which can be changed by pressing the switches. Obviously you have to set the symbols into some sort of combination to open the door. You could spend hours trying to work it out for yourself, but if you explore to the right you'll find a block with some familiar-looking marks on it. Set the symbols so they match and - open sesame!



THE GLADIATORS!



Name: (Baleog the) FIERCE

Age: 25

Height: 6' 0"

Weight: 220lbs

Speciality: Combat, chopping, slicing and dicing.

"My phenomenal upper-body strength makes me skilled at killing things, which I like doing very much. Don't mess with me - I am FIERCE!"

Name: (Erik the) SWIFT

Age: 19

Height: 5' 8"

Weight: 160lbs

Speciality: Scouting, speeding.

"Thanks to my outstanding thigh and calf muscle development I am the quickest Viking on the earth. I am faster than a bolt of liquid lightning - I am SWIFT!"

Name: (Olaf the) STOUT

Age: 23

Height: 6' 2"

Weight: 320lbs

Speciality: Defense, aeronautics, comic relief.

"My high-protein, high-fibre, high-cholesterol diet ensures that I have the weight of a hundred men. Please don't call me fat - I am STOUT!"



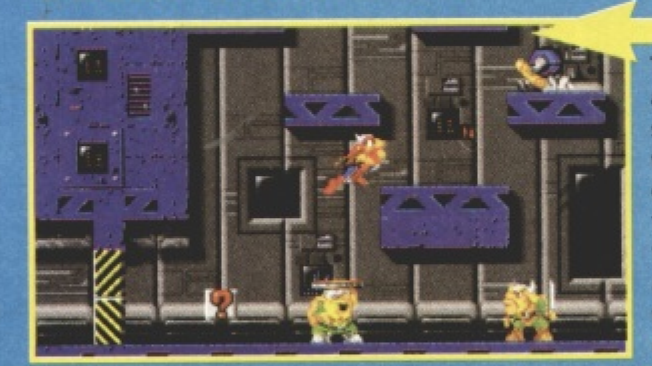
The Lost Vikings calls upon your arcade skills just as much as your adventuring abilities. Here Erik has to dodge the falling blocks as they tumble down from the ceiling and, once they've come to rest, use them as a springboard out of the pit. It's a particularly nerve-wracking exercise! It's this constantly changing pace - one minute slow and thoughtful, the next fast and exciting - that makes The Lost Vikings so much fun to play.



Sob! Erik's... dead! But don't fret - as his burning funeral longboat drifts off into the moonlight as simple tap on the firebutton will resurrect him in a blinding flash of lightning and you can attempt the level again. While this sequence is all very nice the time it takes to load in and the subsequent time it takes to reload the level can get a bit annoying, though fortunately not enough to really spoil the game.



TIME TUNNEL!



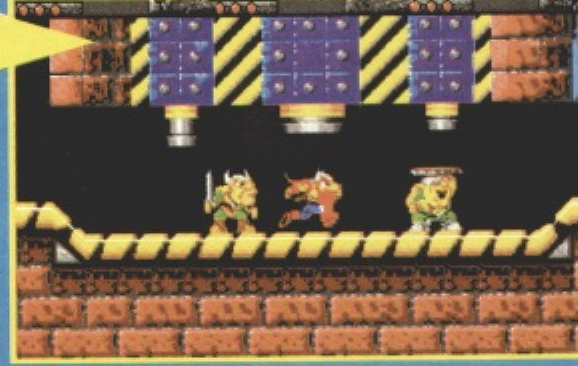
WORLD 1

The trio's adventures start here, aboard a strange alien spaceship (not that they understand what a 'spaceship' is, of course). As they start exploring they learn they've been captured by Tomator, a sort of alien 'big game hunter' who wants them as exhibits in his galactic zoo.

WORLD 2

A weird swirling vortex aboard the spaceship transports the Vikings back to prehistoric times, where cute blue dinosaurs and spinning hairy cavemen roam. The puzzles start to get slightly more tricky here, with the introduction of keys and what have you.

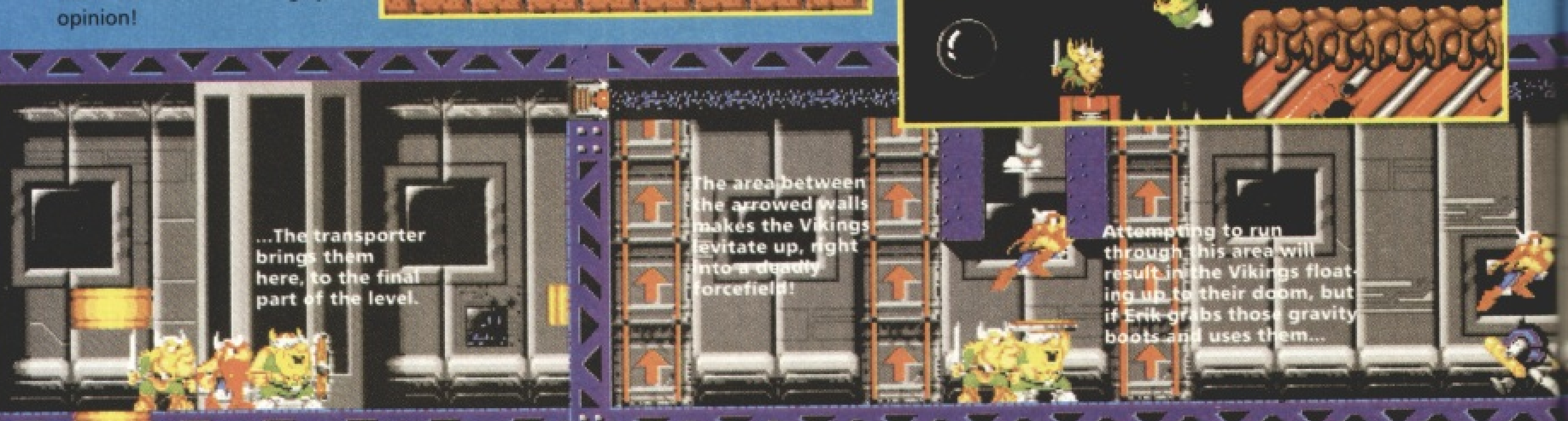
WORLD 4



Next stop - post-industrial apocalypse zone (or something). Basically what that means is lots of crushers, cranes, spinning blades, conveyor belts (hooray!) and gun-toting droids to contend with. If you thought The Lost Vikings was a bit easy then this world will soon change your opinion!

WORLD 5

Sproing! Wacky world! Here you'll find some very strange things, like pumps that can be used to turn your Vikings into floating blimps! Nothing here is quite what it seems so tread carefully. After all, wacky can sometimes mean deadly, you know!



Only Erik has the leaping abilities to reach this ladder.

START!

Here they are - the Lost Vikings, raring to go!

Olaf and Baleog can go no further until Erik sends the lift up to them.

Baleog puts a slimy alien to the sword.

Mmmm, food! Pick it up for extra health.

Erik's atheltic prowess once again comes to the fore when jumping over these deadly spikes



WORLD 3

Another vortex whisks the Norse nutters to ancient Egypt. The monsters get nastier here, the mummies being a particularly notable example - they're invulnerable to arrow attacks and one touch from them turns a Viking into a fellow member of the undead!

WORLD 6

One final vortex journey returns the gang to Tomator's ship and a fateful confrontation with the big bad cheese himself. With his double-barrel laser shotgun and mysterious ability to teleport at will he is, naturally enough, the toughest foe you'll meet all game...





...He can run through safely, jumping over the monsters...

...Until he reaches this switch, which turns the levitation field off. Olaf and Baleog can then mop up the monsters and head for the exit! Hooray!



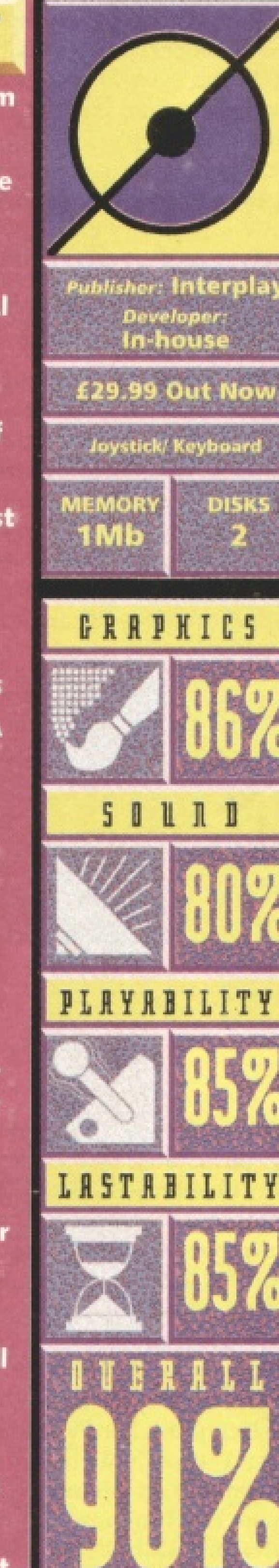
Using the key opens the door, allowing the boys access to a teleporter...

Erik flicks this switch, turning off the forcefield and sending the lift up to Olaf and Baleog.

While Olaf protects the team from the laser turret, Erik jumps in and nabs the yellow key.

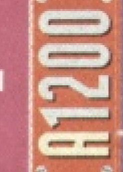
THE VERDICT

I love this game. It's got more charm than Roger Moore wearing a lucky pendant bracelet. The way the three Vikings gripe with each other is hilarious and this, along with the excellent animation, gives them real character, making the task of getting through each level all the more enjoyable and addictive - as if the game wasn't addictive enough already! I'm not typically the biggest fan in the world of arcade adventures but by keeping the levels small and putting the emphasis more on tightly-constructed puzzles rather than endless trekking from A to B carrying object C to get object D to take back to A (you know the sort of thing) The Lost Vikings won me around with no problems. The game's not flawless, though. The time it takes to load a level, even a level you just failed and want to retry, can get a bit much for a start. But - hey! - if the game was perfect you'd hate it - think of The Lost Vikings' loading times as the mole on Cindy Crawford's top lip, a minor blemish throwing the excellence of the rest into sharp relief. My other worry is about how long the game'll last. I ploughed about halfway into the game within a day's play, though that said the first few levels are real simple stuff compared to what comes later so I'd imagine that the second half of the game will take a lot, lot longer to complete than the first. But these grumbles aside, I haven't had so much fun with a game for a long time, and I'm confident that when you play The Lost Vikings you'll be feeling much the same way too.



Publisher: Interplay
Developer: In-house
£29.99 Out Now
Joystick/ Keyboard
MEMORY 1Mb
DISKS 2

GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	80%
PLAYABILITY	85%
LASTABILITY	85%
OVERALL	90%



A1200: Absolutely 100% compatible, with the only bonus being that the occasional slowdown you get on the 'normal' Amiga is removed.

GET OUTTA HERE!

Here we join Erik, Baleog and Olaf as they battle through the final level of Tomator's spaceship and discover the warp to the prehistoric zone. Follow their adventures for some ideas as to how The Lost Vikings plays.



ISHAR

As you can guess from the screenshots with their familiar first-person 3D view Ishar is an RPG in the Eye of the Beholder vein. However, whereas most RPGs take place in dark, depressing dungeons, in Ishar you spend a lot of your playing time above ground in lush and exotic woods and plains. It's all very pleasant, and an experience made all the more enjoyable now that the graphics are rendered in 256 glowing colours on the A1200.

As RPGs go Ishar is not quite as straightforward as it looks. Sure, there's plenty of good old-fashioned monster bashing but there's also a lot of talking to people and following clues and leads. If anything it's more of a graphic adventure than an RPG and in many ways all the better for it. Although you can get a bit lost at times - a natural hazard with a game so vast that lets you wander where you will - this is compensated for by the immense satisfaction you feel when you make some progress.

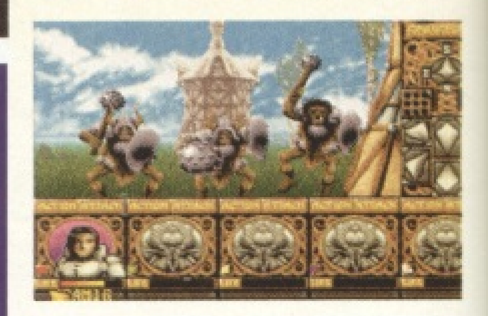
Graphics aside, the only major improvement over the 'old' version of Ishar is in the disk accessing - basically once the game has loaded there isn't any, which is very nice.

When I first reviewed Ishar back in July of last year I gave it 87%. Since then RPGs have moved on a bit, what with the likes of Legends of Valour and Ambermoon, but the story still grips and the improved graphics and disk accessing are definite pluses. For those mixed reasons Ishar on the A1200 gets...

OVERALL:87%







UPDATES

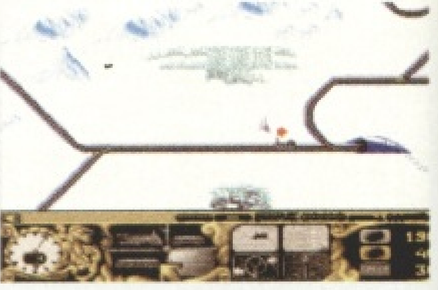
This month two Silmarils titles join the ever-increasing ranks of games enhanced specially for the A1200. But does that make them significantly better? Here's where you'll find out, with David Upchurch as your guide...

TRANSARTICA

Transarctica is set in a future devastated by a nuclear winter. Travelling around snowy landscapes in a steam train, it's your job to discover how to bring back the cloud-hidden sun. Thi involves much trading at various towns and doing battle with enemy trains. I wasn't too enamoured of the game when I reviewed it back in March, awarding it a decent but hardly stunning 67%. I afraid to say that this new A1200 version hasn't changed my mind much. The fundamental gameplay faults are still there, such as the tedious train-shunting and boiler-stoking, so will the A1200 implementation improve the game much?

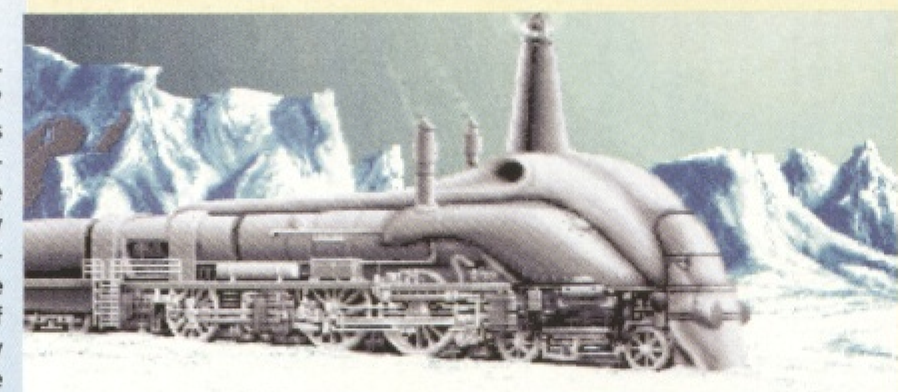
The most obvious improvement is (as usual) in the graphics department. This is all very well but the palette is limited anyway simply because of the nature of the graphics (it's largely snow, snow and more snow), and an extra couple of shades of light blue don't really make that much of a difference to the overall look of the game.





The most surprising thing about this A1200 version is that it doesn't flow any faster. Scrolling around the game map is still jerky, the train still moves in jumps and, unlike Ishar, the game comes on three disks so you still have to do a fair bit of swapping, more's the pity. Come on, Silmarils, this is a 32-bit computer for gawd's sake! As an A1200 owner I expect a bit more from my 'enhanced' game than this, which is why I've decided to give Transarctica...

OVERALL: 62%



THE (RAIL) ROAD TO RICHES

CITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD ARE MASSES OF IDLING, POLLUTING, HONKING CARS. WE NEED MASS TRANSIT - BUT LOCAL AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS JUST CAN'T GET IT RIGHT. IF YOU CAN CREATE A SUCCESSFUL MASS TRANSIT OPERATION YOU'LL BE DOING THE WORLD A SERVICE AND REAP HUGE FINANCIAL REWARDS - BUT THAT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING...

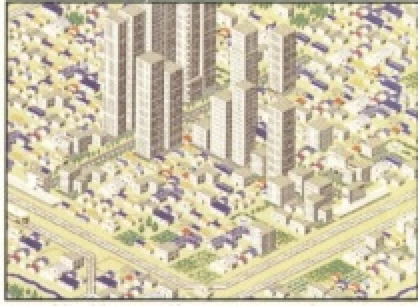
FIRST, MANAGE YOUR RAILROAD - TRANSPORT PASSENGERS AND FREIGHT, EXTEND YOUR LINES, AND DEVELOP THE MOST EFFICIENT AND PROFITABLE ROUTES AND SCHEDULES. THEN, BORROW FROM THE BANK, BUY AND DEVELOP LAND, EXPAND YOUR HOLDINGS INTO HOTELS, FACTORIES, RESORTS AND DEPARTMENT STORES, PLAY THE STOCK MARKET, AND BUILD A FINANCIAL EMPIRE.

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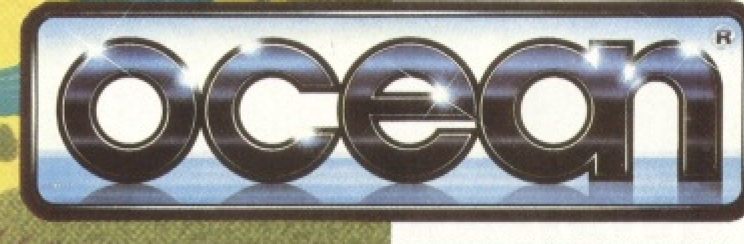
"A-TRAIN may be the best game we have ever played. It is so good that within an hour of opening the box we were hooked. A-TRAIN is easy to learn, and its play is infinitely varied. It rates an A+." LOS ANGELES TIMES


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What with Summer coming and all that you'll no doubt be spending most of your cash on T-shirts, ice creams and suntan oil, which doesn't leave a lot left over for software purchasing. But, as we all know, there's nothing better as the sun slowly sinks in the west and a warm breeze plays over your face than a quick blast or bit of problem solving. So you've come to the right place here, as we guide you through the latest low-price lovelies.

BULLY'S SPORTING DARTS

Alternative Software £7.99

You can't beat a bit of Bully on a Sunday, right grannies? Well, thanks to this little game, you can now have a bit of the irritating bull whenever you like (with chips is probably the best way). Rather than being based on the TV series and including a senile bloke and a load of trivia questions, Alternative has licensed the Bully character on its own, so what we have here is an out-and-out darts simulator.

Computer darts games usually employ the wobbly hand method of throwing and Bully's is no different. The hand shakes around the screen like a drunk with a nervous disorder, making aiming accurately very tricky indeed. Add to that the 'luck factor' (where darts are thrown off the board for no apparent reason) and you can see that this is certainly no pushover.

This control method works well, giving you just enough confidence to attempt tricky shots and at the same time managing not to be frustrating when it all goes horribly wrong (as it invariably does). If you're getting a thrashing by the computer then you can always select a lower skill level from the nine available.



Bully's darts isn't just an ordinary darts game, however. There are loads of variations of the drinking man's noble sport so you can often find yourself competing in other fascinating pastimes such as football, golf or cricket. These 'sports' are still darts-based, the difference being that some numbers can be blanked out and the way you score depends on the rules for that particular variation, all of which are detailed in the manual. (SB)



OVERALL 68%



STARBLADE

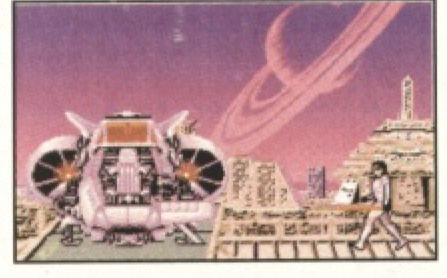
Games Worth Playing

£9.99

Isn't it amazing how quickly computer games date? Just think about some of the games we reviewed this time last year - Dune, Floor 13, G-LOC, Jaguar XJ220, Pushover, Ultima VI... Seems like a lifetime ago, doesn't it? Imagine where this leaves something like Starblade, which was released three years ago. Did they have Amigas then?

You see, Starblade has dated - and badly. In it you play a lone starpilot, scouring the galaxy for the home world of the evil Genolyn. By visiting planets in the your ship Starblade you collect clues to Genolyn's hideout, all the while fending off attacks from her hideous minions.





It's a weird sort of hybrid, one part space shoot-'em-up, one part beat-'em-up, one part trading/management, one part strategy. As you travel from world to world there are frequent attacks from alien spacecraft, resulting in damage to the ship which needs to be repaired by trading for parts on the planets. Each planet is populated by various nasty inhabitants, all intent on your demise, entailing much hand-to-hand combat.

Like many of these 'all things to all players' games Starblade falls sharply between its many stools. The various forms of battle are simplistic, the trading element is boring and the ship management requires a lot of tedious to-ing and fro-ing between decks. On top of all this, everything takes place at a snail's pace, removing any element of excitement whatsoever. Three years ago Starblade may have cut the mustard but now it's a very dull 'Blade indeed. [DU]





CHEAPOS!



MIDWINTER

Kixx XL £12.99

Here's a piece of interesting trivia for you to digest. Did you know that when The One reviewed Midwinter back in 1989, it received an incredible 96%? Sensible Soccer only got 93%, Monkey Island 2 was awarded a paltry-by-comparison 94%. Is Midwinter the best game ever? No, of course not, it just goes to show that it takes more than a bit of 3D here and there to impress us hardened journos these days.

You are Captain John Stark, leader of the Free Villages Peace Force (the equivalent of our humble British Bobbies), who has to recruit fellow members of the FVPF and assemble a huge gang to overthrow an enemy army, lead by General Masters. Trouble is, though, your mates are scattered far and wide across the island of Midwinter and the only way of getting to them is by skiing across the snow-lined landscape, a task made hazardous due to the fact that there are loads of hostile vehicles roaming around.

So what we've got, then, is essentially a shoot-'em-up with mild strategic overtones thrown in. During your mission you can pick up loads of other modes of transport, such as buggies and hang-gliders, and the 3D view as you trek from location to location changes depending on what you're driving. Unfortunately, the action is very stop-startish and as the terrain doesn't vary that much, you can soon become bored with moving from place to place.





The 3D sections move fairly quickly but the nature of the landscape (hills, hills and more hills) means that the display can often jump around, so you're often left confused as to which way you're moving. A smoother update would have helped here but seeing as though the game won't load on an A1200, it looks as if you'll have to get used to it.

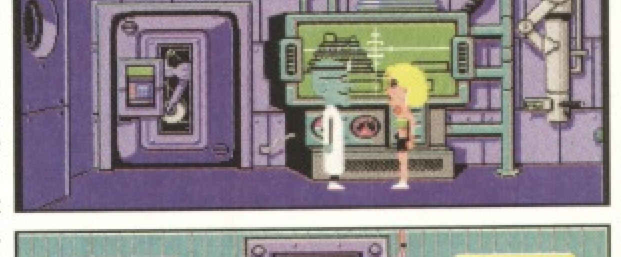
Okay, Midwinter was a milestone when it was originally released but when you consider how well it was received back in the 'olden days', it's a little disappointing to discover that some games, no matter how good they were, are never as good as you remembered. [SB]

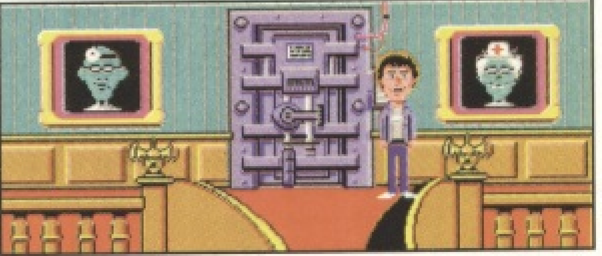


MANIAC MANSION

Kixx XL £12.99

Sandy, a skimpily-dressed American girly, has been kidnapped by the evil Dr Fred and his sidekick Nurse Edna and locked away deep inside the Maniac Mansion. After selecting a group of three dumb teenagers (one of which has to be Sandy's bloke, Dave) your task, should you choose to accept it (and you'd have to be pretty stupid not to as you've shelled out money for the game), is to nip inside the creaky house and save the captive from Dr Fred's nasty experiments.





Yes, we're in familiar territory but Maniac Mansion has an air of excitement about it which makes solving the game easy only if you're wearing nappies. Because the trio are often in separate locations you have to keep an eye out for the fiendish characters who are intent on capturing the teenagers. Cut-away scenes are used to great effect here - if a short animation appears showing Dr Fred deciding that he could do with a nosh-up, you know you need to get whoever's in the kitchen as far away from food as possible.

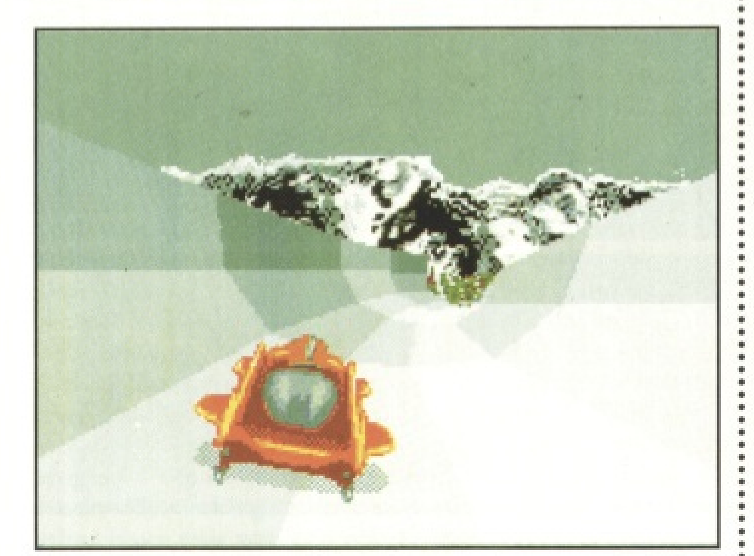
Maniac Mansion was originally written during Lucasfilm's big-head cartoony days. This graphical style may have looked comical back in 1987 but when compared to the lush releases seen today it just looks a little tacky. That's something that can't really be said about the game as a whole, though, as it has managed to retain its charm and humour a good six years on from its first release.

For a game of its age the interface isn't as primitive as you'd imagine, and far more intelligent than the one seen in Future Wars (another recent Kixx XL release). The only thing that's missing is the automatic highlighting of any objects that can be moved or manipulated, although this can be overcome by the 'What is?' command.

Of course, Maniac Mansion isn't as sophisticated as the adventures we've become used to but then again, you can't pick them up for a bargain price (yet) so if you fancy a cheap edge-of-the-seat challenge then you couldn't really do much better. [SB]

OVERALL 83%





SUPERSKI 2

Games Worth Playing
£9.99

Skiing sims have been a computer game staple for years. Anyone remember Horace Goes Skiing on the Speccy? And the latest addition to the genre is this, SuperSki 2. In fact, the title is a bit of a misnomer, as you can get up to quite a varied selection of snow-related antics, including slalom and giant slalom, hot dog, ski jumping, downhill racing and even bobsleigh. It's not all skiing, you know.

From the menu you can choose to either practice an event or compete in it (against up to three other human players and four computer players). If you're feeling particularly hard you can even go for the biggy - compete in the Olympic Games, where you get to compete in all the events one after the other Most of the events are depicted in sprite-based 3D. It's hardly ground-breaking stuff, but it depicts the action well enough and it's moderately speedy if not smooth. The various events are sufficiently taxing, with each requiring a fair amount of skill before success is earned. If truth be told there's only thing SuperSki 2 lacks...



...And that's excitement. I've never been skiing for real but I'm sure it's got to be more thrilling that this. SuperSki 2 just doesn't get the old adrenalin pumping. This is partly due to the stupid loading times between each go. I don't wish to sound petty but I hate being told 'Player One Get Ready' then having to wait thirty seconds as the disk drive chunters away. SuperSki 2 is an entertaining-enough time waster, but it's doubtful that you'll play it for more than a week after you've bought it. [DU]

OVERALL 65%

LOST DUTCHMAN MINES

Global Software £7.99

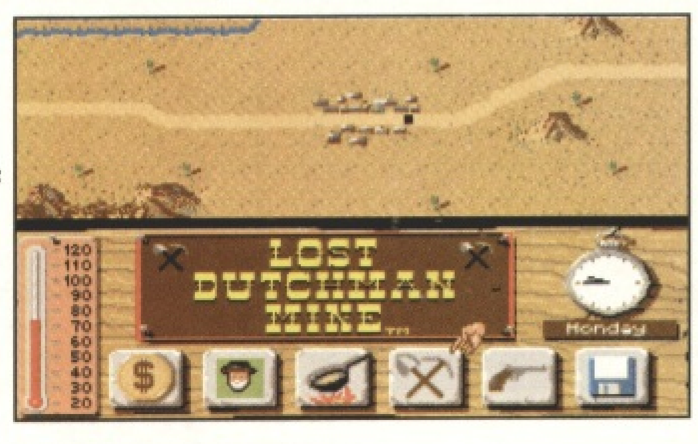
The 'West' was notorious for being a bit 'Wild' but judging by this tedious little game you would have thought that the cowboys spent most of their time wondering around sparse areas trying to fathom out just what exactly made their lives exciting.

Lost Dutchman Mine places you in control of a pathetically-drawn gold prospector who has decided that the time is right to discard the life of washing in horse muck and set about discovering untold wealth and stuff like that. The first thing you'll notice about the game is the 'unique' mouse and joystick control system it uses. Basically you control the main character by moving the 'stick in the direction you want him to go whilst using the mouse to select commands and the like from the middle of the screen. This may sound complicated but it's not. It's just the start of a downward spiral which will test your patience beyond belief.

Having got past the unusual control system it's onto the game itself. Exciting, revolutionary, breathtaking and astounding are just four of the words which couldn't be used to describe the gameplay. Unless, of course, they all meant completely boring, which they don't. I don't know, there's something about Lost Dutchman Mine which is utterly tedious. It can't be the traipsing endlessly around waiting for something to happen. or staring at garish backdrops for all of eternity, wishing to God that I hadn't been given this game to review. Except it is.

The Goldfield News
BARRETT GANG STILL AT LARGE
The Barrett Gang is still at large after the ambushing of yet another prospector in the Superstition Mountains. Doc Wilson reports that Pete Radison was shot three times, but is expected to live.





If you're going to write an epic Western adventure then Lost Dutchman Mine would serve as a handy reference point of what not to do. The only thing which is in the game's favour is the fact that it's multi-tasking so you can run other programs in the background (memory permitting, of course). If you do have eight quid burning a hole in your pocket then I'd suggest that you make good use of this feature and type commands into the CLI, you'll get much more enjoyment out of that. (SB)

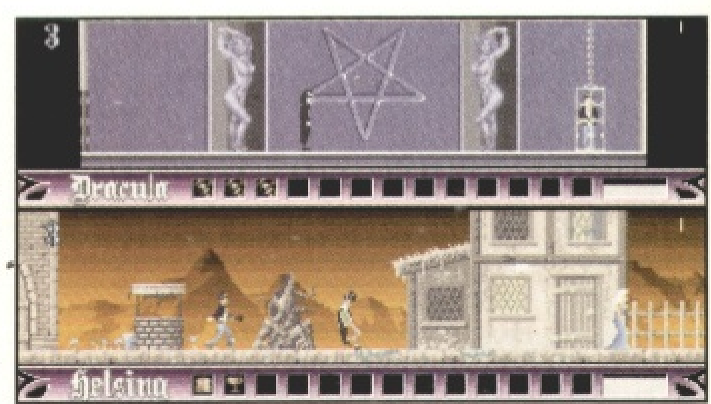
OVERALL 30%



CHEAPOS!

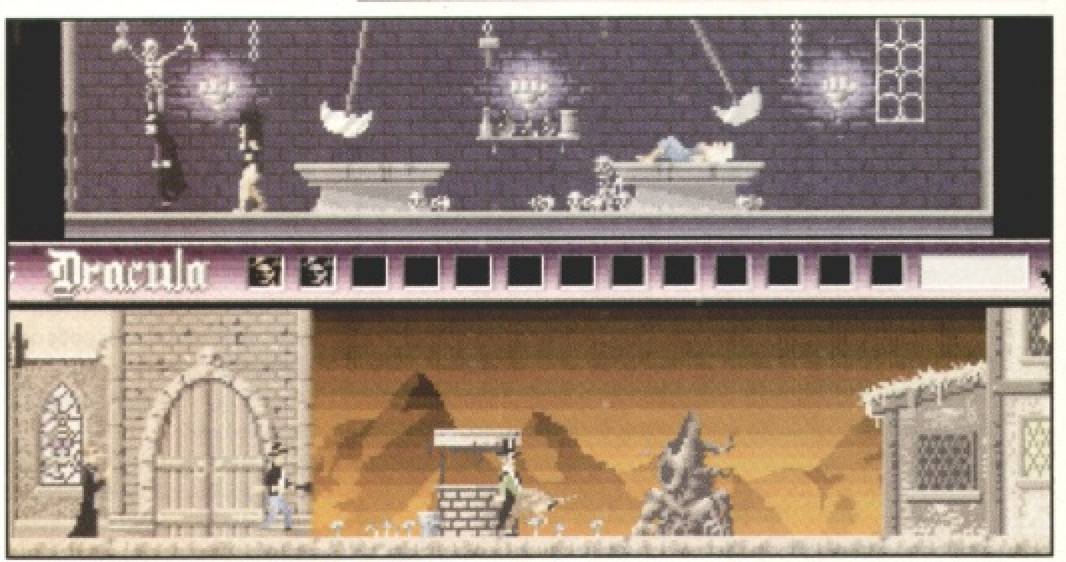
BRIDES OF DRACULA

Zeppelin Platinum £7.99



The best thing about this game is its opening sequence. It starts with a neat little cartoon depicting Dracula and his mortal nemesis, Van Helsing, racing against each other in a bid to win the good versus evil battle. The best effect is when the screen suddenly starts to leak blood - it was enough to raise the hairs on my neck, I can tell you. If you are foolish enough to buy this game then I suggest that you switch off after the cartoon - it's downhill after that.

The story starts with Drac in a bit of a dilemma. He's decided to get hitched but being a superstitious (not to say horny) little vamp, he wants to marry thirteen young virgins. Luckily the local village sports just that number. Van Helsing has, however, caught wind of Dracula's foul-smelling plan and has set out to collect the thirteen items he needs for his vampire destruction kit.



What we have, then, is a one- or two-player game where you can play either Van Helsing or the Count, each of whom has to collect thirteen objects (or virgins) and then return to his home. The gameplay is a simple platform affair without the platforms. Basically, you have to run left or right to visit the various locations in your search for the objects, bumping into loads of nasties which may drain your energy depending on whether you are playing good or evil.

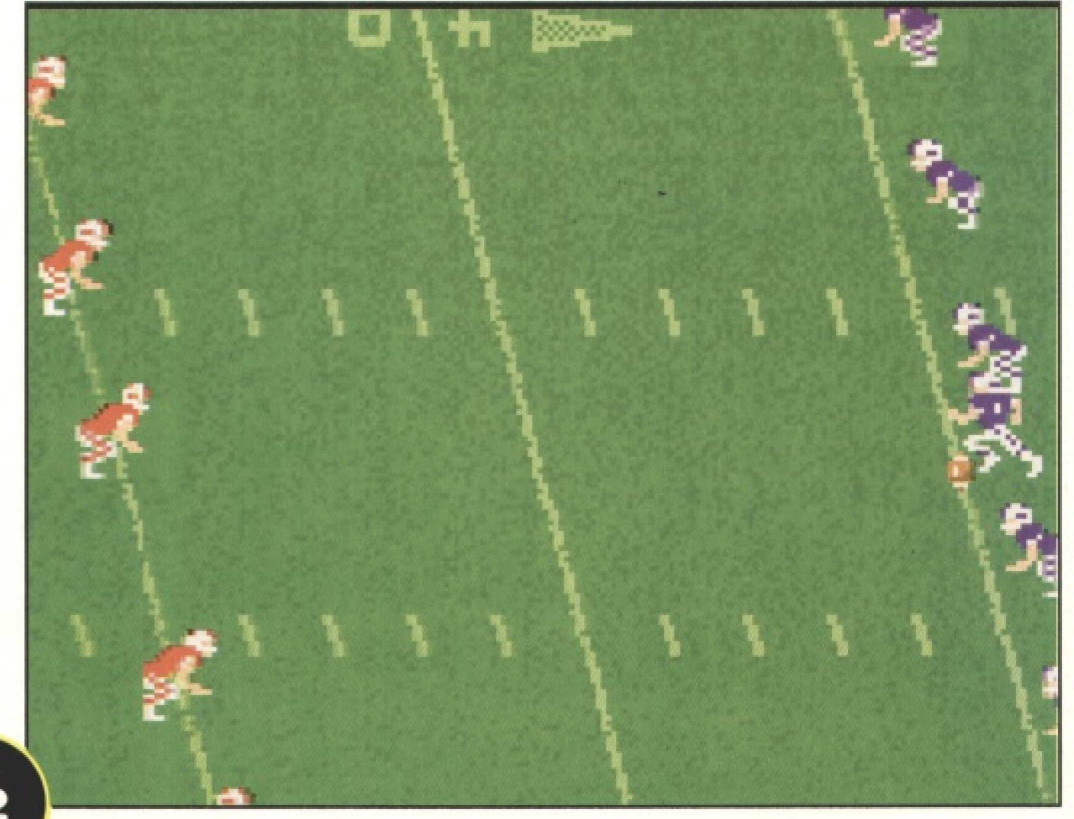
It's an intriguing idea for a game but one that has been poorly executed. The scrolling is abysmally slow, the sprites look like something Lowry would have drawn (matchstick men, for the less enlightened) and the basic premise that you have to collect and return the objects individually leads to very repetitive gameplay. All-in-all one to avoid. [DU}

OVERALL 34%

4TH & INCHES

Hit Squad £9.99

I love American Football. To my mind, there's nothing better than sitting down on a Sunday night with a few cans of lager and the match on the box. It must be one of the best spectator sports going. Of course, it isn't everyone's cup of tea so for those of you unfamiliar with the real thing, American Football is a game where two huge teams of enormous Neanderthals jump on each other in an attempt to gain possession of a pig's bladder. It's a shame, then, that 4th & Inches butchers this great sport so effectively.

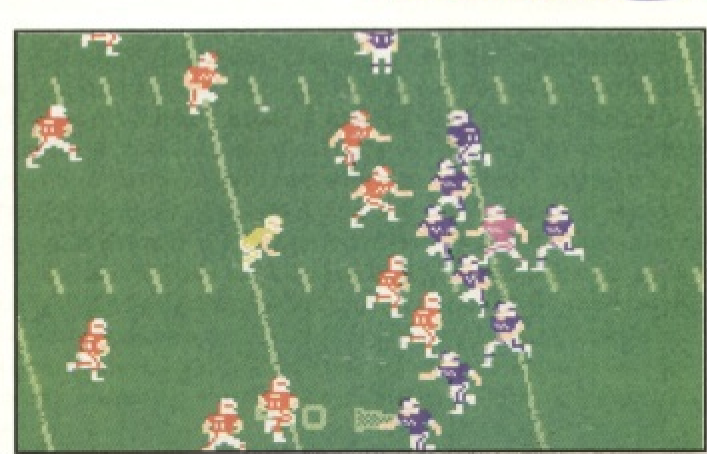


The main thrust of the game seems to be strategy-based. There are over eleven offensive and five defensive formations to choose from, as well as more than thirty plays to select. As the coach, it's your job to decide who plays where and each player has a series of stats to help you to come to a decision. Once you've sorted all that out, it's on to the game itself. It's at this point that 4th & Inches falls flat on its face.

The sprites are incredibly small and they all look the same, the scrolling has more jerks in it than a jerky thing (all right, I couldn't think of a decent simile) and the joystick response is ineffectual. And if the animation wasn't slow enough already, you have to wait around for about five minutes after a tackle's taken place for the rest of the team to stop milling about.

This game is a seriously poor attempt at converting American Football to the Amiga. It removes all sense of fun, speed and watchability. If you're a fan of the real sport then buy a decent sim like John Madden from EA.
[SB]

OVERALL 20%



THE BOSTON BOMB CLUB

Games Worth Playing

£9.99

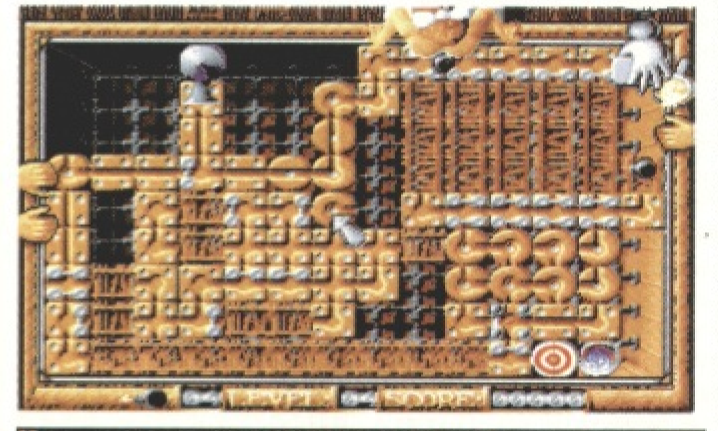
Back around the turn of the century there was a club in Boston whose members had a most unusual pastime. You see, there's nothing these gentlemen liked more than building weird wooden mazes, constructed of rotatable sections. They would then roll bombs around the maze and, by turning the sections, attempt to create paths for the bombs to a bucket of water where the bombs would be extinguished before they exploded.

Now this may all sound like the biggest load of bullocks you've ever heard but I swear it's true, probably, and now you can try this fascinating old hobby for yourself in the aptly titled Boston Bomb Club. In the foyer of the Club there are five old men standing around, and by clicking on one of them you can choose a difficulty level. Don't be tempted to walk before you can run though - The Boston Bomb Club is tough!

Each maze takes up a single screen. Bombs are ejected from a container and slowly roll along the tracks. By clicking on the various wheels, gates and what have you you can rotate them, thus creating a route to the bucket of water. If a bomb spends too much time rolling around or meets another bomb then it explodes. This is not a good thing, as you've got to get at least one to the bucket to move on to the next level.

This may all sound a little easy and, in theory anyway, it is. However, the spectators around the edge of the maze will ruin your best laid plans by moving maze sections just when you don't want them to and in later levels all manner of strange contraptions are introduced, such as bomb-bouncing trampolines. It all adds up to a cracking puzzler and one that will keep you amused for months. A brilliant budgeteer! [DU]











STRIKEFLEET

Hit Squad £9.99

Strikefleet is a command-based battle simulation that lets you take control of a whole armada of ships and helicopters. Initially, it appears to be graphically uninspiring due to its simplistic depiction of maps and battle screens but you soon realise that this is an unworthy comment on what is quite a deep strategic sim.

There are fourteen possible scenarios to jump into, from protecting the Falkland Islands to taking out the Russian fleet as it sails to Norway. If you ignore the dated anti-Commie stance of many of the scenarios you'll see that they offer good scope for strategic planning. Once you've selected the mission, it's onto the fleet section. Here you choose what ships will make up your force; each type of ship has different weapons and capabilities, so it's important to choose wisely. For instance, if you're likely to come up against subs, it's vital to have some torpedoes handy.

Once the fleet's been chosen, you have to select your destination and then it's straight into action. Most of your time is spent at the bridge of your flagship, though it's important to continually check the status of other ships. The bridge screen, like most of the game's graphics, is fairly basic but the layout is intuitive and it doesn't take too long to get used to the controls. This simplistic layout lets you concentrate on developing the gameplay which soon becomes absorbing.

Despite the fact that most targets only appear as blips on the radar screen or as amorphous blobs in your binoculars, I found myself thoroughly involved in destroying them and entranced by my mission objectives. The action can sometimes appear a little slow but there's always the time compression facility to speed things up and when you're in the heat of the battle trying to protect two or three cruisers, you'll soon be grateful for a lack of speed.

When I first played Strikefleet, I quickly decided that it was just another poor war sim, but after coming back to it I soon found myself warming to its tactical representation of sea warfare. If you like the challenge of being in control of fifty things at once, then this game could be for you. [SB}

OVERALL 78%

CHEAPOS!



THE GREATEST

Beau Jolly £29.99

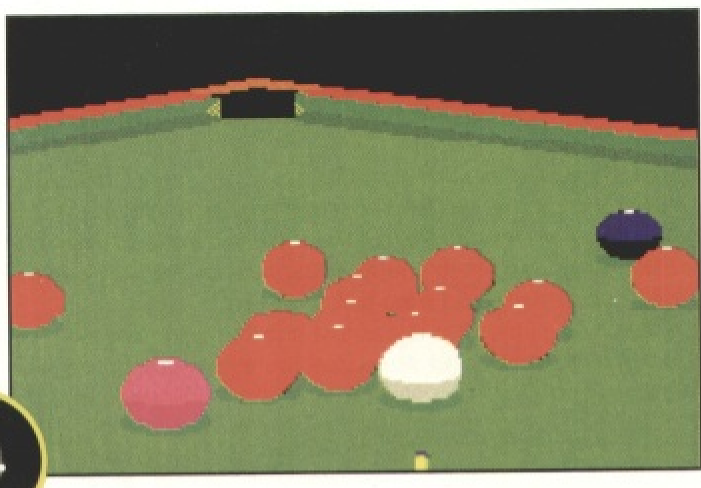
As a seasoned cynical reviewer I usually approach compilations with a jaundiced eye. The reason? Well, you can normally guarantee that in a three game comp, there's one good one, on average one and one absolute stinker. I say 'normally' because The Greatest could actually live up to its name and break the mould - despite the fact that it's probably the oddest mix of games ever to end up in the same box!

First up we have a fantastic graphic adventure in the form of Lure of the Temptress from Revolution Software. Assuming the role of Diermot, an unwilling hero, you must find some way to defeat the evil machinations of a witch and her army of grotesque Skorls. It's the usual mix of point-'n-click and puzzle solving which starts with Diermot and his mate Ratpouch trapped in a Skorl dungeon. Once you find some way out, you've got to get in touch with the locals and try to enlist their help.

It's here that Lure raises itself above the mire of average adventures, for each non-player character has a life of their own and will react in different ways depending on how and when Diermot approaches them. The boys at Revolution call this Virtual Theatre and it's the closest we've come to witnessing real life within a computer game.

It's obvious that a lot of time and effort has gone into Lure's production with every aspect of the graphics, sound and gameplay showing polished programming skills. Of course, there is a downside which is common to most adventures, i.e. interminable disk swaps and a degree of linearity to the gameplay. Still, seasoned gamers will be used to these little niggles, so they're not too distracting.

Dune comes next, an adaptation of Frank Herbert's lengthy, complex novel. Converting a book as involved and awe-inspiring as Dune can't have been easy (even Hollywood, with all its millions, couldn't turn out a decent film adaption) but, fortunately, it looks as though Cryo, the French development team, have put a great deal of thought and effort into it.



You assume the role of Paul Atreides. You and the family have just been granted a Spice mining licence for the planet Dune. Spice is the galaxy's most expensive commodity as it holds the key to long life and space travel. Unfortunately, most of Dune is under the control of the House of Harkonnen who are sworn enemies of the Atreides, so a showdown is never far away.

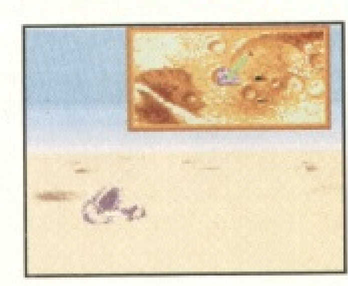
To maintain your licence you've got to get production rolling almost immediately. To do this you'll need the help of the Fremen, who are local tribesmen. Most are only too willing, but a few need a little gentle persuasion. Unfortunately, you've also got to deal with the giant sandworms which roam the planet and are attracted to the slightest vibration - exactly what Spice mining produces.

Once that's under control you can move onto the next phase, training and equipping the Fremen to form a cohesive fighting unit. It's here that the negative elements begin to surface; the regular visits to Spice mines seem to have been put in purely to prolong the game and the same could be said for the troop training.



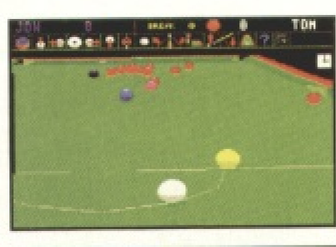


Those quibbles aside, Dune is an impressive conversion of a detailed novel. The graphics are superb and the animated set-pieces are equally effective. Sound-wise, the spot effects and in-game tunes are suitably alienand serve to enhance what is already a brilliant adventure. This will appeal to both Frank Herbert devotees and other gamers alike.

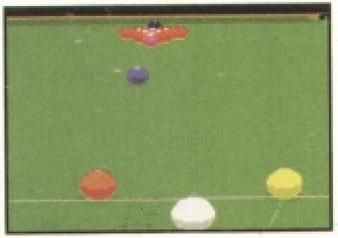


The last game in the bunch seems like an odd one to stick in with two adventures. However, Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker is still the best computer version of the old green baize game yet.

There's not a lot that can be said about this snooker sim except that it contains just about every feature the real thing has. You can view the table from almost any angle and distance, set the power level of your cue, use top/back/side spin and even add chalk to the cue. Of course, lining a shot up on a small computer screen is not easy but there's a useful dotted line of sight option to combat this.

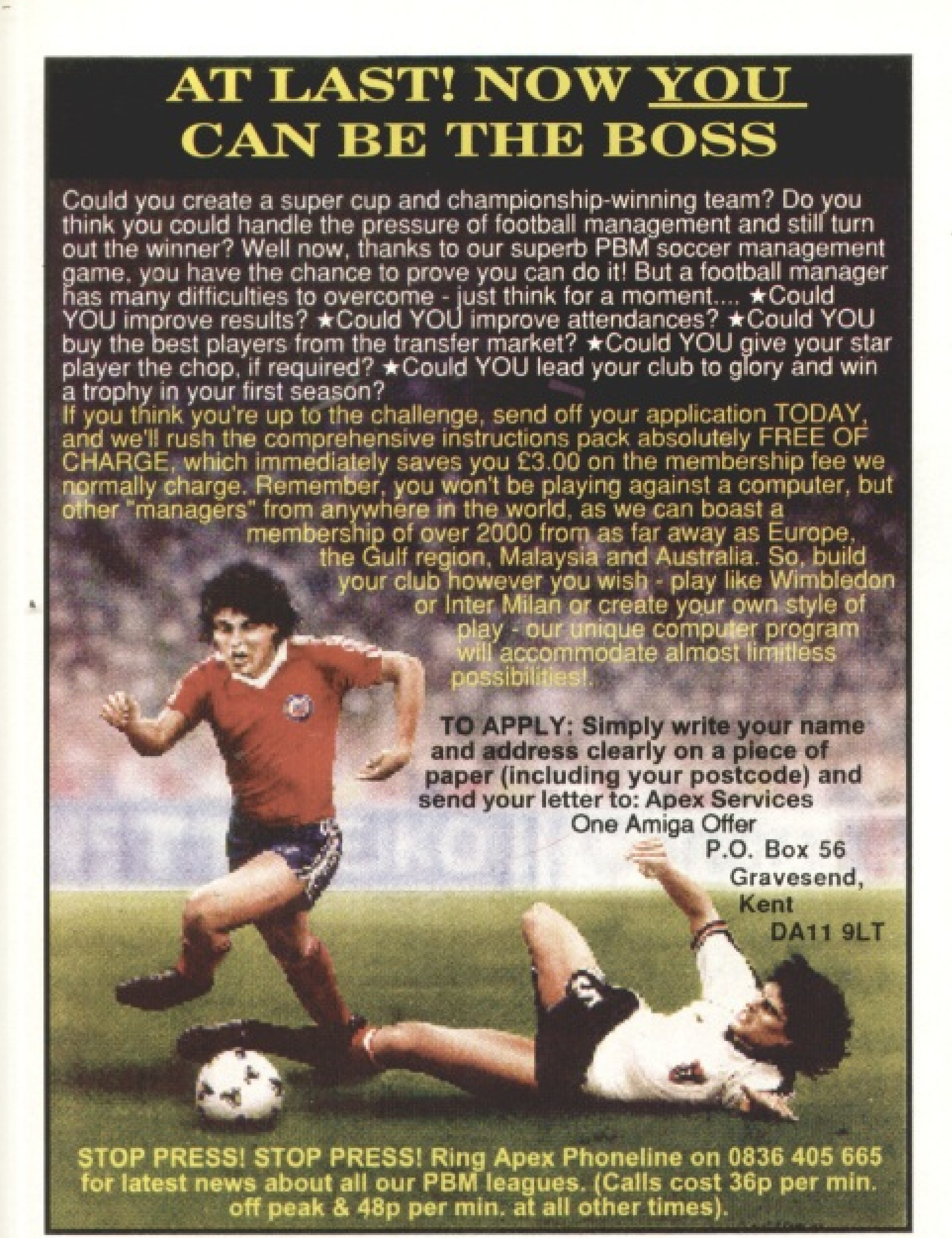


It has to be said that snooker can be a fairly slow game, especially if you're simply a spectator. Fortunately, this version has added a neat graphical twist for those long moments when you're deciding which shot to play - take too long and flies will buzz you or the balls will suddenly sprout faces and make funny expressions at you. Without a doubt, no other snooker sim has ever come this close to matching the real thing and JWWS should definitely not be missed.



As a fan of graphic adventures and an occasional player of ball games, this compilation is a dream for me. The Greatest is simply the best collection of games ever to hit your Amiga. Buy it. [SB]

OVERALL 91%



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Courtesy of Psygnosis.

We all like a good dance here at The One and we can't think of a better song to get on down to than the excellent Lemmings record by SFX which is in the shops right now. If you haven't heard it yet then you must be some form of recluse as it is absolutely everywhere. In fact, I'd be very surprised if it isn't Number One in the hit parade by now, as it really is brilliant and is guaranteed to put a spring in your step. Zebedee from out of the Magic Roundabout was a normal guy before he heard the track and look at him now.

Psygnosis are very pleased, and quite rightly so. To celebrate their high spirits and to get the record mentioned in this magazine yet again they've offered a stonking prize which should appeal to music lovers everywhere. The first prize winner will be able to select ten Parlophone CDs, LPs or cassettes from the record company's huge back catalogue and when you consider that they publish albums by EMF, Jesus Jones, Blur, Tina Turner, Hammer (née MC), The Pet Shop Boys, Frank 'Old Blue Eyes' Sinatra and The Beach Boys to name but a few, you can be sure that there really is something for everyone.

If - God forbid! - there aren't any artists that you like published by Parlophone (and you'd have to be very, very, very taste-challenged for that to be the case) then just think of all the birthday and Christmas presents you need never buy! So if you win you'll be a winner in every sense of the word.

HOW TO ENTER

We were throwing around a few ideas as to what question we should set for you lot to answer until we remembered that questions are old hat - it's like being back at school, isn't it? Nah, seeing as though it's a music-related prize and all that what we've decided to do is ask you to make up a Lemmings limerick, poem or a rap (no more than eight lines long for the poem or rap, please). There you go, couldn't be easier, could it?

When you've thought up your entry, plop it on the back of a postcard or stuck-down envelope and send it to: Yo! Chillin' Lemmings Compo, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. If your entry does need more space then you can stick it on a piece of paper inside the envelope.

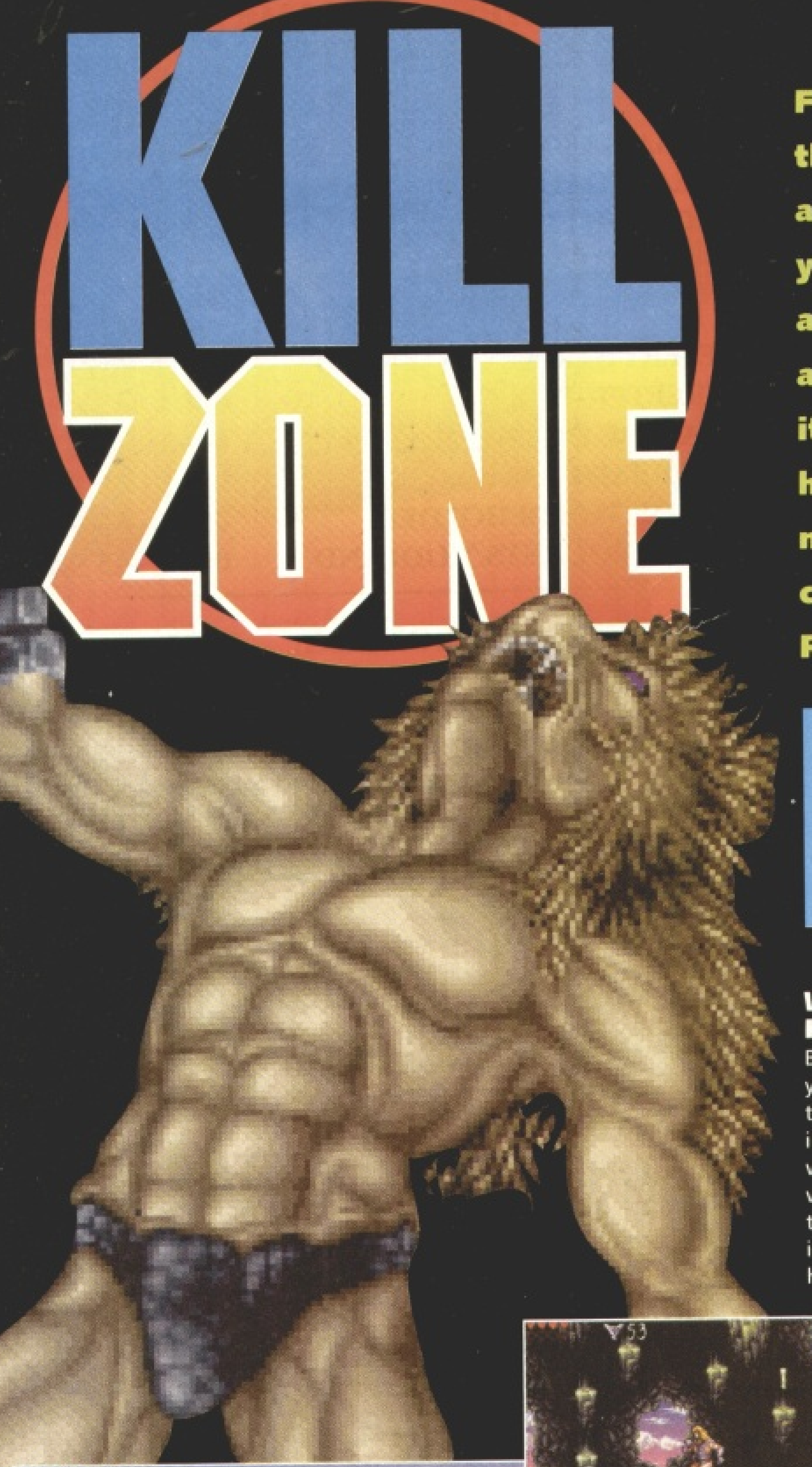
The best limerick, poem or rap we receive will win ten Parlophone CDs, LPs or cassettes of the writer's choice (we'll send you a back catalogue, don't worry), the second best will be able to choose five Parlophone CDs, LPs or cassettes and the next five best entries will all be able to select one Parlophone CD, LP or cassette. All entries must reach us by June 28th, the Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



KILL ZONE

For most games, life is like hiring one of those peddle boats and splashing around in a pond for a while - no matter what you do, you can't avoid having your number called and being asked to vacate your vessel. When a game is featured in the Kill Zone, it knows it's living on borrowed time - within the hour Amiga gamers will gain the knowledge needed to beat them once and for all. So come in Lionheart, the Chaos Engine, Chuck Rock 2 and KGB, your time is up.

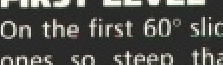
LION



WHERE TO FIND THE HIDDEN BONUS ROOMS

Bonuses always come in handy but you'll not discover the whereabouts of the major caves without a subtle push in the right direction. But then again, who wants subtle pushes? Not us - were going to positively punch you in the faces with bricks and stuff by giving you the EXACT locations of these handy points, power and lives increasing icons. Here goes, then.

FIRST LEVEL



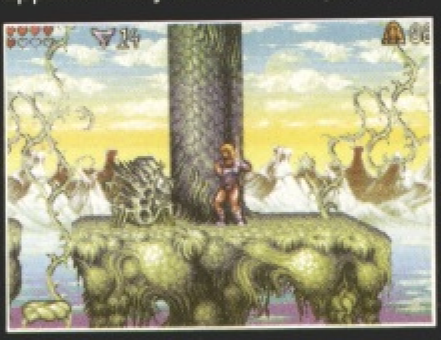
On the first 60° slide (the ones so steep that you can't run up again), it's possible to jump onto a leaf when you're slipping down if you time it just right. From here you can reach another leaf, this time with two crystals on it. But that's not all you can do! If you leap further onto the highest leaf, jump straight up into the air and wait for approximately ten seconds, you'll discover that a beetle will whisk you away to a massive bonus area. Collect all the goodies you can possibly can and make your way towards the exit.

You'll notice that there is a chasm between you and the way out and if you drop into the huge gaping void and move the joystick to the right (or if you're playing in HARD mode you'll have to move to the left) and you should find yourself in another secret room.

THIRD LEVEL (SECOND SWAMP LEVEL)

Right at the very beginning of this level there's a 30° slope which leads to a 60° slide. Run, run as fast as you can down the first slope to gain as much speed as possible. Then, just before you descend the slide, leap forth into the blue yonder and you should find that you land safely on a leaf. From here you can jump further and reach stacks of bonuses (or 'boni', as it says here) after you've killed a few of the nasties.

You'll also find that there are a few destructible plants in this level's floor and by chopping them away you'll be able to drop down into some minor bonus caves.



FIFTH LEVEL (THIRD SWAMP LEVEL)

At the beginning of this level, you'll find yourself standing in front of the exit of the second spidercave. Keep





HEART

Thalion's superb platformer is one of the toughest slash-'em-ups you'll ever come across and we expect there are literally thousands of balding gamers who have torn hair from their scalps in an effort to get just a little bit further. Well, worry no more, dear Paul Daniels look-a-likes, help is at hand. Here's some general tips on the game with the locations of the major bonuses.

moving to the left until you reach a huge expanse of water. Now, as you know, Vladyn can't swim very well because he forgot to pack his water-wings before he set out on his mission so what I'm going to say next may sound very stupid but if you run towards the edge of the H2O and jump at the right time, a magical leaf will appear and prevent our hero from getting his suede boots wet. If you push your luck once again and make just one more suicide jump to the left, another leaf will turn up and you'll be able to leap off this and into a small cave containing an extra life (YES!) and the stronger sword (INCREDIBLE!).

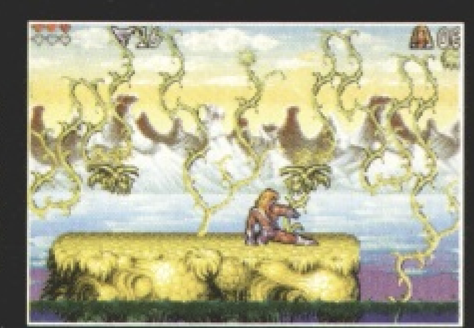
SIXTH LEVEL (FIRST ANCIENT CITY LEVEL)

By now you'll probably have acquired an appetite for extra lives (or 'One-ups' as they're known in the trade) so it's now time to gorge yourself as there are plenty to be found in this level, but you'll need to be pretty skillful to reach them, I can tell you.

First of all, kill the swarm of insects nearby. Done that? Good. Right, you know that downward fighting jump-type thing? If you do that on the steadily hovering insects to the right, you'll be able to use them as convenient jump-pads to make your way past. Now, if you climb up onto the golden roofs you'll discover that many of these platforms lead to bonuses and all kinds of great stuff like that.

SEVENTH LEVEL (SECOND ANCIENT CITY LEVEL)

A little way into this level you'll come across a large 45° slope and if you leggit down this ramp you should be able



to gain enough speed to do a huge leap before you drop off and land somewhere very special indeed.

Further to the right there's a swinging platform which can be used to reach the tiny walkways above. It's here that you'll discover the third sword.

A few more screens to the right there is a tower with fire chain at the bottom. Move to the right of the platform and let yourself fall down to the right. If you've done all this correctly, you should land on a marvellous swinging platform and be able to collect the extra lives and other superb bonuses.

SECRET LEVEL

You always want more than you've got, don't you? That's half your trouble, you know. Still, if you really fancy getting your hands on the Mother of all Swords then here's the place to do it - but be warned, it ain't easy!

When you come across the moving spikes with a stoneball-thrower just behind them, don't climb out of the way in an effort to avoid the situation. No, be brave and attempt to get past the generator. Now, if you let yourself fall down to the right and use the hovering ghost as a jump-pad like you did in Level Six you should be able to reach the mighty weapon.

SUPER HIDDEN BONUS LEVEL THING

As you know, Vladyn is on two missions. Defeating the evil git at the end of the game may well bring the King happiness (the greatest gift that Ken Dodd possess, apparently) but if our liony friend hasn't discovered the cure to bring his lovely girlyfriend back to life then he's going to face a despair-filled future.

The magic amulet which will heal Ilene can be found in the Volcano level. We're not going to give you the exact location of it - you'll have to work that out for yourselves but what we will say is that it's hidden away in a cave which can only be entered by using some clever block manipulation. Cryptic, eh?

TOP TIPS ON MONSTER MASHING

GIANT INSECT

You can only inflict damage on this 'un by leaping onto its back and kicking the flashing bubble in its neck. To do this, you need to defend yourself against its attacks and use the insects from the third attack wave to leap onto the Giant Insect's back (by using - yes! - the downward fighting jump).

FIRE DEMON

Run to the right and use the platforms to make several attacks using the invaluable downward fighting jump. Jump to the right as soon as you hear the sound effect that tells you the demon is gonna leap up. While he's in the air, try and manoeuvre yourself between his feet and duck when he lands on you. Then stand up and hit him from below, making sure that you're ready to move if he leaps up again. Whenever he begins his descent, duck!

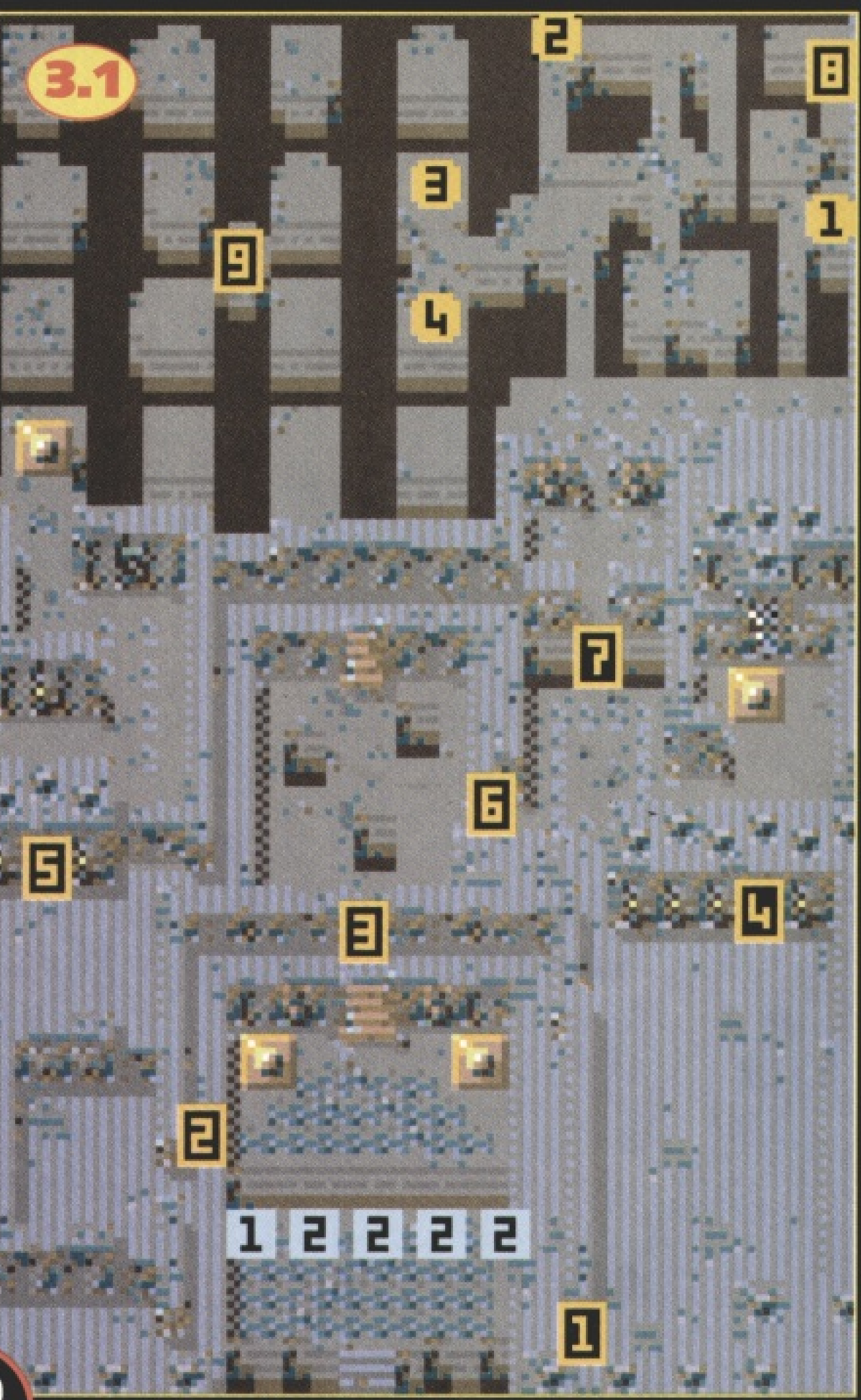
GIANT METAL DRAGON

You'll know when the dragon is going to gob a lethal beam at you because he'll turn his head slightly, so watch out. Fly up, avoid the beam and steer downwards and to the right as fast as possible, looking out for the grenades thrown by the monster sitting on the dragon's back.

Fly under the dragon, jump upwards and climb onto it's paws. If the dragon's head decides to attack you then fend it off with a few well-timed sword lashings. Climb onto the dragon's back, kill the critter and hit the blinking device in the dragon's neck. After a successful hit to its vulnerable spot, the dragon will throw you off. You'll need to repeat this procedure a couple of times before he finally gives up.

THE CHAOS

'Ere we go then! This is the second and final part of the complete guide to The Chaos Engine, detailing all the game's secrets and taking you right up to the fateful confrontation with the maniac Engine itself. Can U handle it?



WORLD 3

LEVEL 1

As you enter the level you are presented with a choice of five keys. All of the keys marked as Silver Keys (2) create a bridge across the chasm. As soon as the bridge appears, a Hand Monster materialises on the bridge and runs to the attack. The bridge will disappear after short while but if you can manage to get across it before it does so, you will have access to the secret area at Location (2).

If you fail to get across any of these bridges you can collect Silver Keys (1) which will create a permanent bridge across the centre of the chasm. These keys make all of the sets of Silver Keys (2) disappear and thus you will not be allowed get into the secret area at Location (2), however you will be allowed to pass through Location (1).

All of the StoneWatchers on the wall at Location (3) can be shot. You will be rewarded with a coin for each one that you destroy. The statue at Location (4) is facing a different direction to all the other statues around it. If you shoot it you will be rewarded with lots of treasure but you'll have to kill of a few Spiders first. The statue at Location (5) is also facing a different direction to it neighbours. You have to shoot this statue so that you will be allowed out of the area.

The routes from both areas converge in the room by Location (6). When you collect the Players Saved token at the top the stairs into this room, the wall at Location (6) will be removed and you can thus progress deeper into the level. The route forward is then blocked by the door at Location (7). You must shoot the node in the room to the east to remove this door, you are then through to the maze of pits at the end section of the level.

To get the centre of the maze, you must solve the puzzle in the eastern area first. Collect Gold Keys (1), then collect Gold Keys (2). The latter set must be approached from the southern walkway. If you attempt to collect them from the east, they will disappear before you can get to them and you will have failed to solve the puzzle. When you have got both of these sets of keys you be able to reach Location (8).

After you have collected the treasure on the small island at this point you will be teleported to Location (9) in the centre of the pits. If you fail to solve the puzzle or if you wish to go a different route through the pits you may collect either Gold Keys (3) or Gold Keys (4) but not both sets. Each of these keys lead to a different route, each of which contains a different mix of monsters and treasure.

LEVEL 2

As you enter the level you are presented with a choice of four corridors. You will be sent along a different route depending on which way you choose to go:

- Corridor (1) leads out into the western room to the north of the start point.
- Corridor (2) loops back to the start point.
- Corridor (3) leads out into the eastern room to the north of the start point.
- Corridor 4 loops back to the start point.

If you take both corridors (2) and (4), when you finally arrive back at the start point, Silver Keys (1) will have appeared. When you collect these one of the tiles on the floor next to you disappears as a small section of the floor rises up. If you step onto this section you will be teleported to eastern room to the north of the start corridors.

At this point you are back on the main route into the level. However, in the next room, the statue at Location (5) will be disappearing and reappearing. If you walk into the wall behind the







ENGINE

Legend
Start points
Nodes
Silver Keys
Gold Keys
Points of Interest
Exits

statue you will be teleported back to the start point once more, however this time the wall next to the position of Silver Keys (1) will have opened and you will be able to access the secret area which leads to exit B.

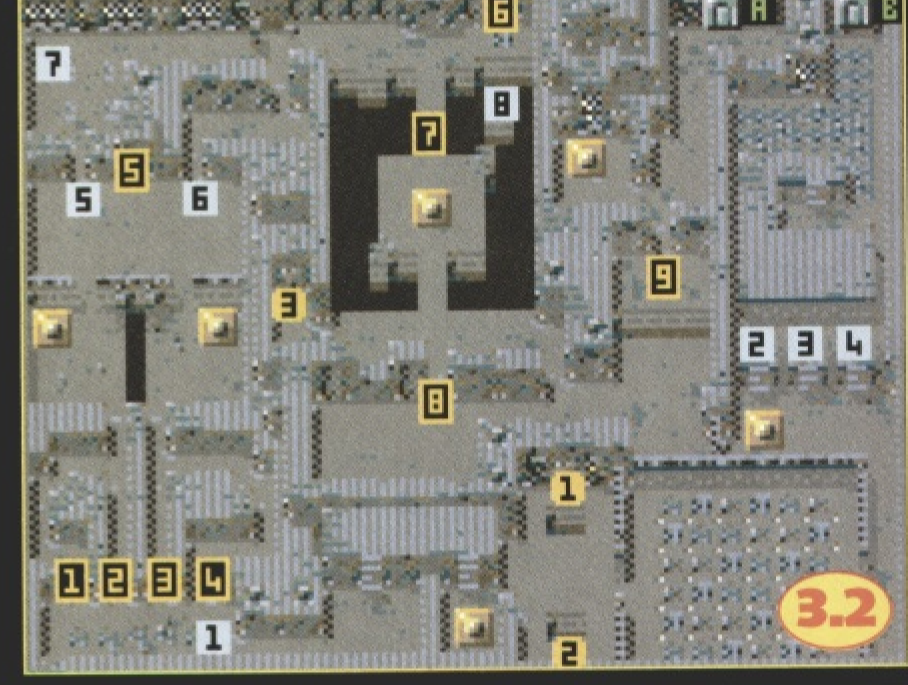
Within this secret area, if you collect both set of Gold Keys (1) and (2), a clue will appear as to how to solve the puzzle floor within the next room. To solve this area you must follow the sequence of shapes on the floor: circle, square, plain. If you get it wrong you will be teleported back to the start of the floor. The more mistakes you make the less treasure you will find when you get to the end.

After you have shot the node in the next room three set of steps will appear, each of which leads to a different set of silver keys. Each of these sets of keys produces a different bridge to the next area. Each one also removes some of the treasure within that area. Silver Keys (4) will give you the most when you cross the bridge, as you will only have to collect one set of keys, although you might try the others to see what you can get.

If you do not get into this area you must follow the main route through the level from the start point to exit A. If you pass via the western room to the north of the start corridors only the node in that room exists and only Silver Keys (6) are in the room to the north. If, however, you enter the eastern room only the node in that room exists and only Silver Keys (5) are available. Silver Keys (5) open the door to the east out of this room. Silver Keys (6) open the door to the west. If you go this way you must then collect Silver Keys (7) which open the exit from that section.

The island just to the south of Location (7) has lots of treasure on it. If, however, you just try to walk on to it you will be teleported back to the start of the pathway and all the treasure will disappear. To be able to progress you must follow the lines on the floor and shoot the statue at Location (6) and then collect Silver Keys (8). If you collect Silver Keys (8) before you have been to Location (7) you will be able to get onto the island and get all the treasure.

Once across the island collect Gold Keys(3). These will open the door at Location (8). If you walk into the room via this point, some treasure will appear. This will only happen if you enter the room from the north. Once you have collected the telephone at Location (9) the bridge to the south of you will disappear, thereby trapping you into the room. You must then shoot the Lobber that has appeared across the chasm to open the door to the north and allow you to proceed towards exit A.



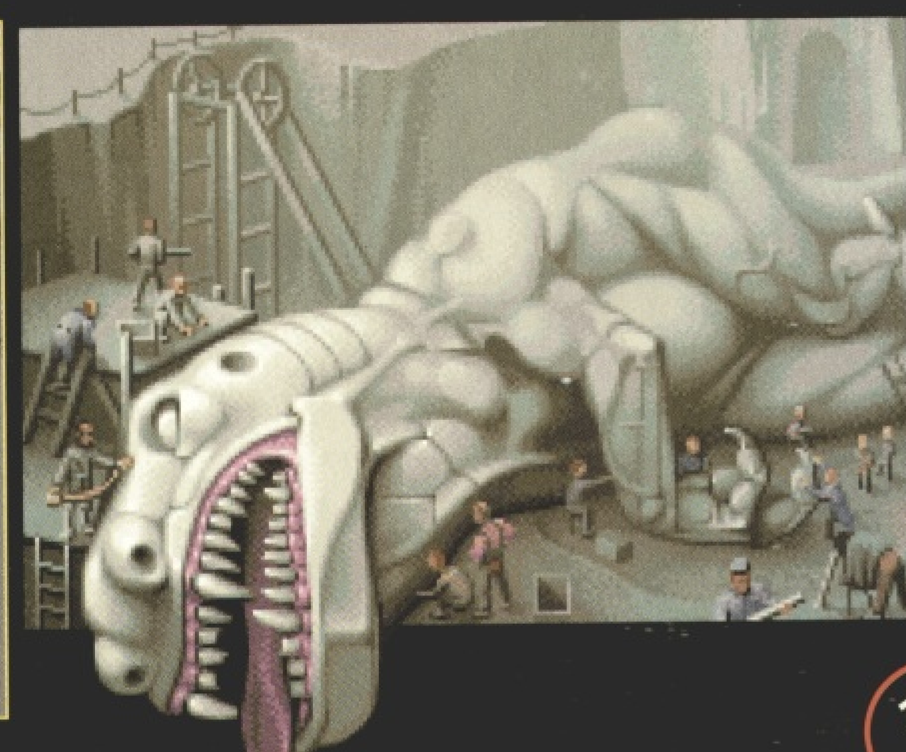
LEVEL 3

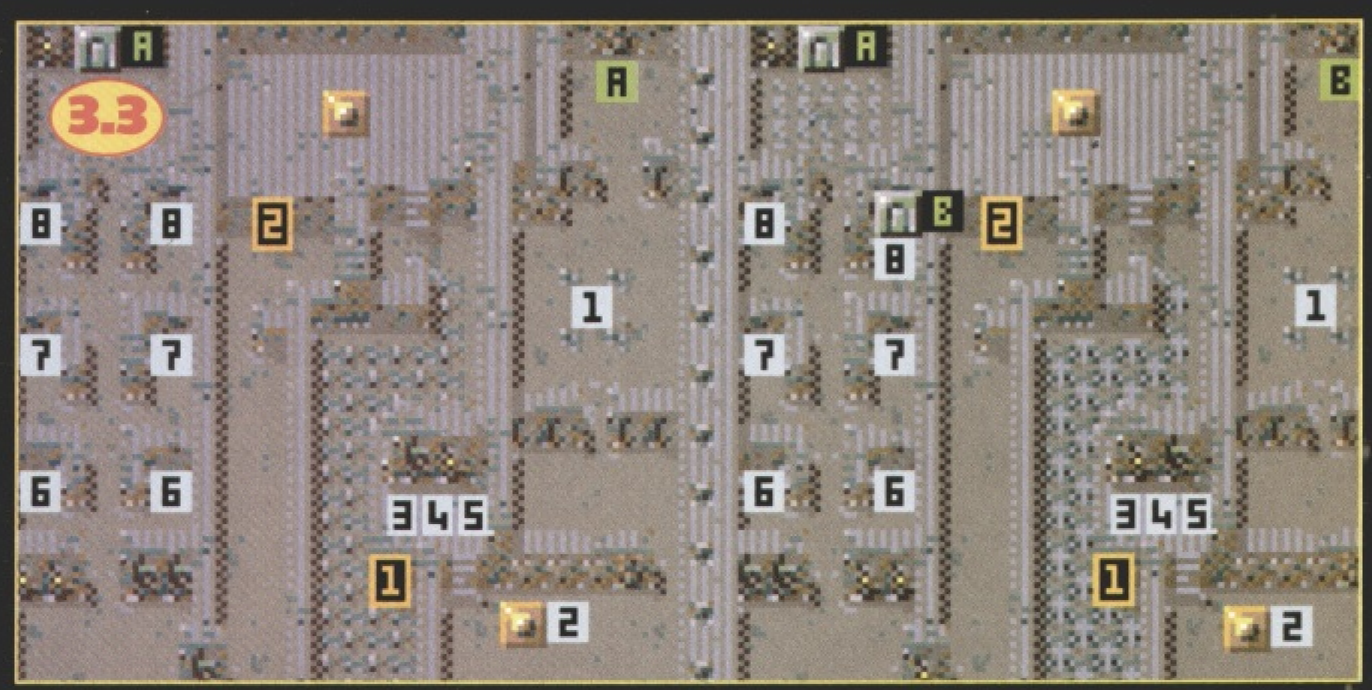
The first thing to notice about this level is that it is made up from two virtually identical halves. This idea is reinforced by the numbering system used to identify the items of interest on the map, which are the same for each side. Which start point you use, and hence which side of the map you play, is dictated by which exit you went through on the previous level. Each side contains very similar puzzles but which tend to operate in opposite ways from each other. The decoration on the walls is subtly different between the two sides, with statues facing opposite directions etc.

If you begin at Start A, you play the western side of the map. All the numbers below refer to items on that side of the map. You cannot get to Silver Keys (1), as an invisible force field surrounds them. To get them you must shoot the plinths around them. Start with the south-west one, then the









north-west one and so on clockwise until you have destroyed all four. At this point the patterns on the floor will disappear as the force field is dropped and you will be allowed to collect the keys, which open the door from this room.

When you activate the node at the bottom of this section, Silver Keys (2) will appear which, when collected, create steps immediately to the west and thus you can continue into the level. Both Silver Keys (3) and Silver Keys (5) create Silver Keys (4) which complete the western set of steps and allow you to get down from this plinth and further into the level.

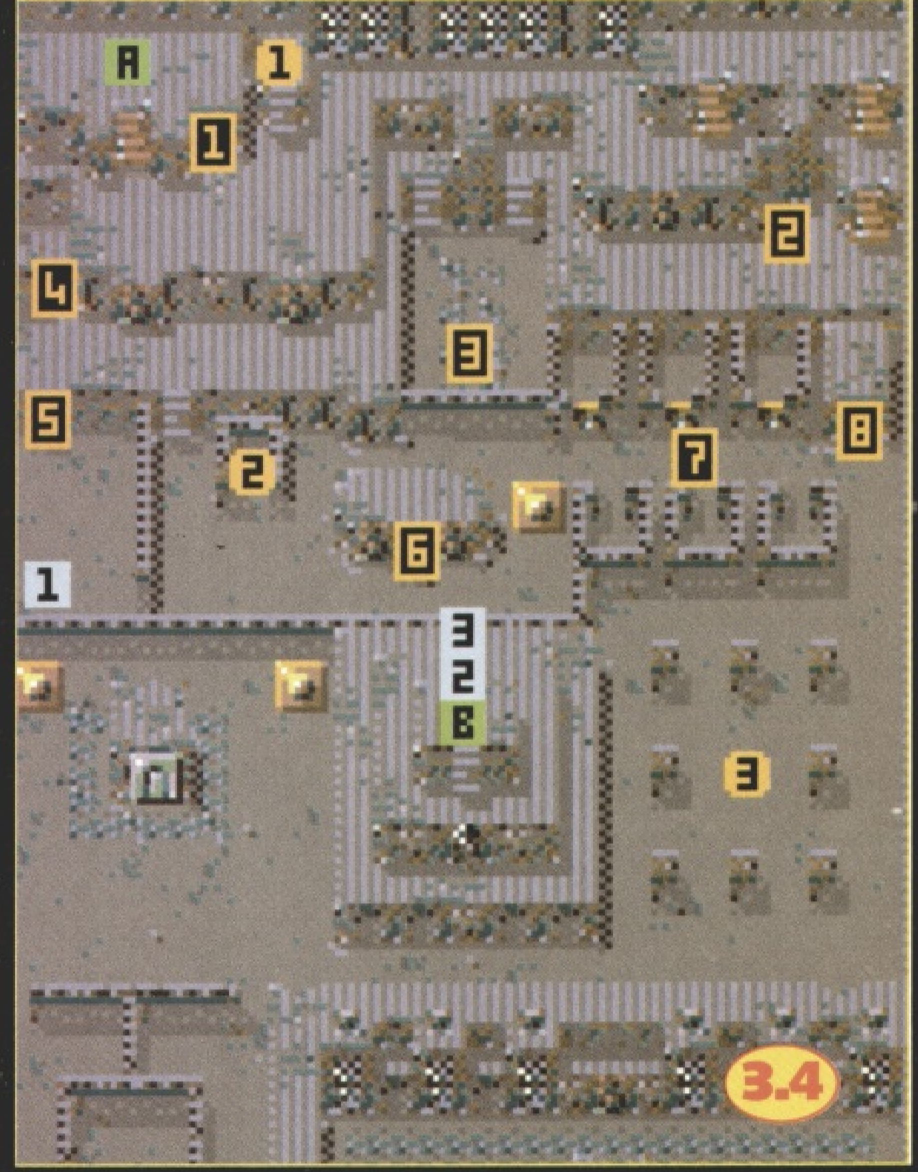
However, if you collect Silver Keys (5), as you set off down these steps you will be teleported to the same place on the opposite side of the map. An easy way to notice that this switch has occurred is that on the western side the floor is decorated with circular patterns, whereas on the eastern side square patterns are used. You must then continue to adventure up the middle channel of this section until you reach Location (2) where you will be teleported back to your original position in the western half. When you reach Location (2) on this side you will just pass through unaffected.

Silver Keys (6) open the door to the room containing Silver Keys (7) on the opposite side of the corridor. Similarly Silver Keys (7) open the door to the room containing Silver Keys (8). Silver Keys (8) open the door at the end of the corridor which allows you to get to the exit. It makes no difference which route through this set of keys you take.

If you begin at Start B, you play the eastern side of the map. All the numbers below refer to items on that side of the map. When you collect Silver Keys (1) you will be trapped inside an invisible force field. To get out you must shoot the MissingLink which has begun to patrol around the outside of the plinths. When this monster is destroyed you will be released and the door out of this room will be opened.







When you collect Silver Keys (2) at the bottom of this section the node marked on the map at this point will appear. Activating this node will create the steps immediately to the west and thus you can continue into the level.

When you collect Silver Keys (4) both Silver Keys (3) and Silver Keys (5) appear. If you now collect Silver Keys (3), Silver Keys (5) will disappear. However, if you collect Silver Keys (5) first you will be able to collect both sets of keys, in which case when you set off down the set of steps which have appeared you will be teleported to the same place on the opposite side of the map. An easy way to notice that this switch has occurred is that on the western side the floor is decorated with circular patterns, whereas on the eastern side square patterns are used.

It is here that the first major difference between the two sides occurs. From your position on top this plinth it is possible to throw an appropriate special weapon onto the node that it is on floor level just to the south and east of you. This means that you are thus able to activate all of the nodes on the level and can thus open exit B. After this you must continue to adventure up the middle channel of this section until you reach Location (2) where you will be teleported back to your original position in the eastern half, and may continue as if you had not been teleported. When you reach Location (2) on this side you will just pass through unaffected.

Silver Keys (6) open the door to the room containing Silver Keys (7) on the opposite side of the corridor. Similarly Silver Keys (7) open the door to the room containing Silver Keys (8). Silver Keys (8) open the door at the end of the corridor which allows you to get to exit A. To exit from B you must collect the right hand set of the pair of Silver Keys (6) and the left hand of Silver Keys (7). Note that this exit will only be open if you have activated all of the nodes within the level, as described above.

If one player, in a two-player game, gets trapped in one of the small rooms in this section, all they have to do is to collect the keys that are in the room with them and then move towards the exit. They will be teleported into the next room in sequence. Note that the major exit from each side of this level, both of which are marked as A on the map, will take you to the same place in the next world, whereas exit B will take you somewhere special.

LEVEL 4

There are two start points to this level (A & B), the one used depends on which exit you took from the previous level.

If you begin at Start B you must first collect Silver Keys (2) and then Silver Keys (3). Neither of these sets of keys are visible until you begin to walk towards them. After you have picked up the latter set an exit will appear which teleports you to Start A.

The statue at Location (1) will disappear shortly after you appear at Start A. If you manage to shoot it before this happens the steps which lead up to Gold Keys (1) will appear. Gold Keys (1) open the door to the small room at Location (4) which contains a small amount of treasure. The small mound at Location (2) is somewhat strange. Monsters and the computer-controlled character can walk over it. If you walk over it, however, it will dissolve and the set of steps at Location (5) will appear, thus allowing access to the area beneath to collect the treasure.

The telephone at Location (3) causes the steps to the north to switch round, blocking access to the area you have just come from and opening up the way forward into the rest of the level. The steps at Location (5) will only be there if you have dissolved the mound at Location (2) as described above. If you go this way you must collect Silver Keys (1) to get out of this bonus section. If, however, the steps at Location





(5) are not there the set to their east, as marked on the map, will be, so you'll have to go down those.

The door into the small room which contains Gold Keys (2) can be shot. Collect these keys to create the steps up to the ledge at Location (6). Monsters generate in the small rooms to the north of Location (7). The doors to each of these rooms will open to let the monsters out. When you have shot all the monsters the doors to each of the rooms will stay open for a short while. If you can get into the room and collect the keys, the door to the room directly to the south will open allowing you to pick up the treasure it contains. The Silver Keys in these rooms make sure that the doors stay open so that you cannot get trapped.

The alcove at Location (8) has a misplaced shadow. If you walk into the wall at this point you will be teleported into the secret area in the south-eastern corner of the map. Once in this area you must adventure through to Location (9), where stepping into the circle marked on the floor will teleport you back to Location (8).

In amongst the pillars below this point, you should notice that the centre one does not have a StoneWatcher on it. If you shoot this pillar on the top it will explode to reveal Gold Keys (3). These keys will open the door to the small room at Location (0), which contains some treasure.







WORLD 4

LEVEL 1

The first large room you come across in this level has lots of Revolving Domes bouncing backwards and forwards across the room. These are invincible and thus cannot be shot - if you do shoot them you will just push them about and it's not a good idea to shove them all to one end of the room, so its best just to avoid them. Collecting Gold Keys (1) and Gold Keys (2) will reduce the number of Domes in the room.

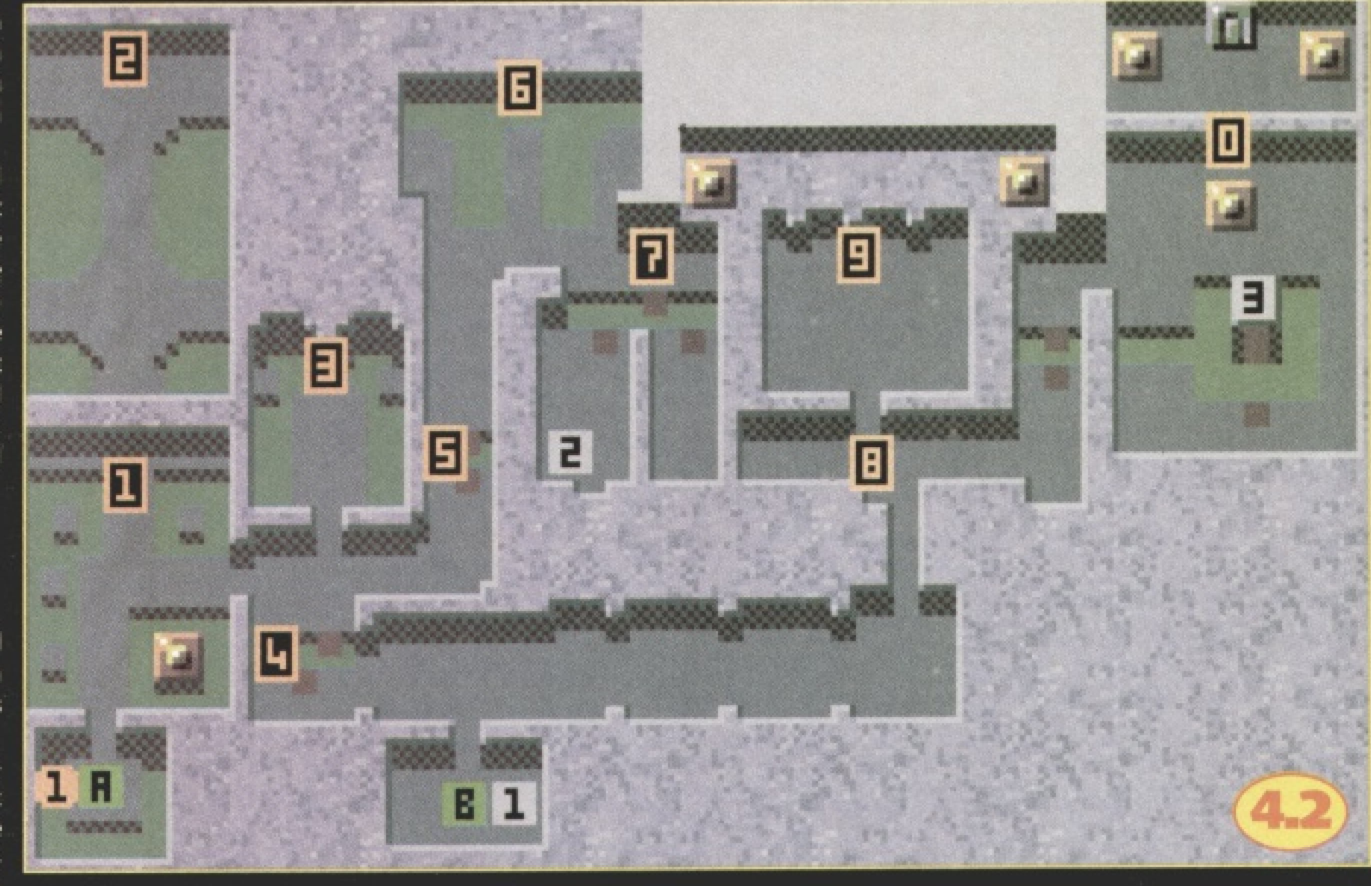
At Location (1) you can either carry on up the narrow corridor to the north or shoot the lever on the wall. As the lever drops the water will drain out of the pit beneath you, you can then get up to the room on the ledge above which contains Gold Keys (3). When you collect these keys the narrow corridor will be blocked and you will be able to cross to the room marked as Location (2). This room contains nothing but an open manhole which (if you walk into it) will teleport you to Location (3).

As you approach the sewer pipes at Location (4) monsters begin to generate in the eastern most of the two pits to the south of the corridor and start moving into the room below. Water flows from the pipe outlet, filling the pit to the west. To progress, you must shoot at the cracked pipe at Location (4), which will blow up and allow water to flow into the eastern pit thereby cutting the supply to the pipe outlet. This will simultaneously drain the water from the west pit allowing you to carry on into the level and fill the east pit, drowning the monster generator. The sooner you do this, the fewer monsters you will have to fight when you enter the room to the south.

If, however, you choose to follow the corridor to the north, at Location (1) you must activate both nodes at the top of the map and then carry on down the corridor at Location (5), which is full of Revolving Domes. These are, again, invincible but in this case you cannot simply dodge them as they

move too quickly. You can push them down the corridor by firing at them and if you can get to Location (5) you will be able to collect a shield token and thus progress safely.

In the next room, the way forward is blocked by a pulsating force field at Location (6). You must shoot the node in the north-eastern corner of the room so that the force field will drop and you can continue. The route to the exit is blocked by a water-filled pit at Location (8). You must shoot the wheel at Location (7) so that it turns twice, thereby cutting the water supply and draining the pit.



LEVEL 2

There are two start points to this level (A & B), which is used depends on which exit you took from the previous level.

If you begin at Start B, you must collect Silver Keys (1) to exit from the first room. You then adventure along the corridor to find an extra life at the eastern end. This route then rejoins the main one at Location (8). If you begin at Start A you must shoot the first node you come across, on the small island just outside the start room. When this node is activated Gold Keys (1) will appear. If you go back into the start room and collect these keys the manhole cover at Location (1) will be removed, revealing a shaft below.

If you step onto this opening you will be teleported into the secret area to the north, which you must leave by walking into the large pipe at Location (2). You must shoot the lever at Location (3) to progress. This lever starts in the horizontal position - if you shoot while it is like this the western pipe will close, stopping the water flow and draining the pit at Location (4).

If, however, you spend too long in the room, shooting monsters and the like, the lever will flip up. If you shoot it at this stage the lever will drop, but this time the eastern pipe will close and the water will drain out of the pit at Location (5). If you can cross the pit at Location (4) this leads into the short-cut area next to Start B, however this time there will be no extra-life token at the end of the corridor.

The pit at Location (5) gives access to the main route onwards into the level. When you reach Location (7) the way forward is blocked by the water-filled pit to the south. You must shoot and destroy all of the pipe outlets which feed the pool at Location (6) in order to drain the water out of the pit and allow you to continue. Start by shooting the one on the left, then the middle one and finally the right-hand one.

Once in the pit below Location (7) you have a choice of routes. If you take the western ramp out of the pit you will enter a large room which contains some treasure. You must then collect Silver Keys (2) to exit this room and rejoin the main route. In the next large room at Location (9) there are three switches on the wall. You must shoot the middle one, which is up, in order to flip it down. This flips the left-hand switch up. When you shoot this one a set of step appears, immediately to the west, and the right-hand switch flips up. You must flip this final switch to drain the final water-filled pit and allow you to enter the final pump-room itself.

However, you must activate the two nodes on the ledge above the switches before you can open the final exit, so go up the steps and clear out this area before leaving the room. The node at Location (0) is only present if you began the level at Start B. You must collect Silver Keys (3) to open the door at Location (0) and to get to the exit.

LEVEL 3

This level is basically a long corridor leading to the single exit at the north. You are stopped from progressing along the corridor by pairs of activated nodes which project a barrier between them. These barriers are lethal and will kill any character who walks into them - you have been warned! You must enter the rooms before each barrier and solve the puzzle in that room





to shut down the next set of nodes and open their barrier.

Room (1) contains a circle of small pits. You must collect the Gold Keys in the centre of the circle to start a number of small rocks appearing in the pits around you. You must then shoot any of the rocks until you destroy one. As soon as one blows up all the pits will disappear and the puzzle is solved. At this point you should note that the light on the north wall of the room has stopped flashing and that a number 1 has appeared. This a clue for later. As a bonus, if you shoot this digit it changes into a 4, which is another clue to a later puzzle in Room (3).

Room (2) contains a spinning wheel. As it passes a contact on its frame it sparks. To solve this puzzle you must shoot the wheel, at which point it stops spinning. If, however, you manage to stop it at exactly the point when the contacts are touching, the wall to the east of the wheel will crack. If you walk into this section of wall if will disappear and you will have opened a shortcut to Room (4).

Room (3) contains a number of monster generators which produce extremely tough Half-Tracks. You must destroy all these and blow up the generators before you can activate the puzzle. At this point a set of numbers will appear on the north wall. It is here that you use the clues you obtained in Room (1). Shoot 1 to deactivate the nodes and open the barrier. If you have been given the extra clue in Room (1) you may now shoot 4 to open a short cut into Room (5).

Room (4) contains a number of small dials, all of which have cracked except one. There is a small button next to this active dial. You must fire at this button to move the needle within the dial. When you have killed all the monsters that are generated to protect the dial and moved the needle within one complete revolution this dial will crack as well and the puzzle will be solved.

Room (5) contains three pistons. When you enter the room vicious Half-Tracks are generated to protect the pistons. As you kill off these guardians, the pistons stop animating and, finally, when all of them have stopped the puzzle has been solved and you may continue to the final section of the level.

The final section of The Hall Of Machines provides you with an overview of what do in the next level. The map of this section is representation of the map of the last level of the game. You must first activate all the nodes in the four small rooms that surround the Generator at Location (6). When the node counter drops to 0 you are informed that the exit is open but on inspection you will find that the door is still shut. However, a power cable joins the Generator to this door and if you shoot the base of the Generator it will blow up, the cable will dissolve and the door will open.

LEVEL 4

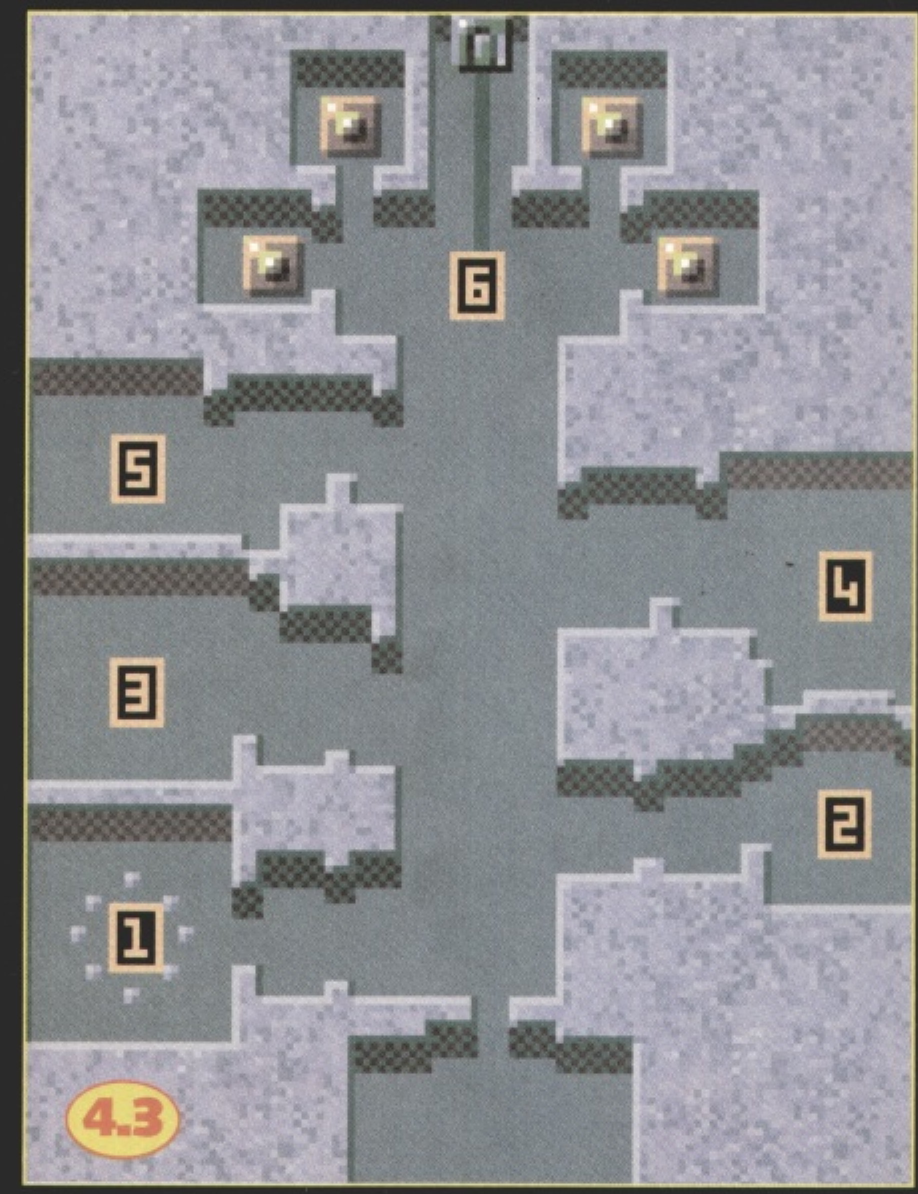
The last level. The Chaos Engine is in the centre of the level and is protected by a force field, generated by four activated nodes. Before you can attack the Engine you must disable this force field. Although the node counter says that there are four nodes to activate in this level, there are no normal nodes; instead there are four Generators, like the one at the end of the previous level. The position of these Generators are marked as nodes on the map. You must destroy each of these Generators, by shooting them in the base, in order to cut the power supply to the level and shut down the force field.

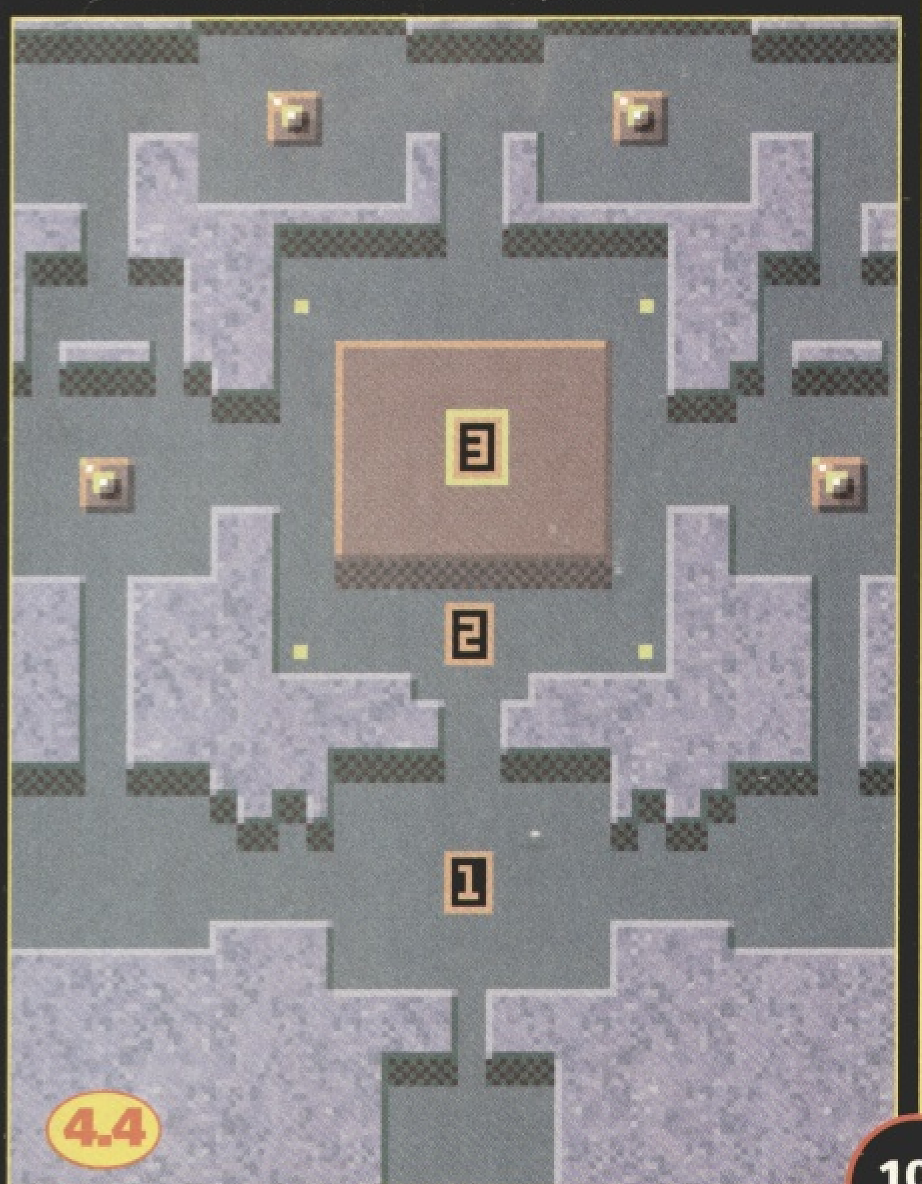
The control room at Location (1) monitors your progress, as each Generator powers its own set of pistons as marked on the north wall of this room. When you shut down a Generator, its set of pistons will cease to move, its dial will be destroyed and the field surrounding the Engine will be weakened. You are also rewarded with a Players Saved token placed in Room (1), for every one that you shut down. You may come back to this room at any time to bring a character back to life or just to check how you are doing.

When you have succeeded in destroying all four generators, you will be told that the exit is open. The force field surrounding The Chaos Engine will disappear and a pulsing ring will appear at Location (2). You must step into this ring so that you are teleported to the final conflict with the Chaos Engine.

The Engine itself has two stages. At first it has a protective shell around it and you must hurt it sufficiently so that part of this shell dissolves away. Whilst it is in this phase it cannot use the full force of its weaponry. However, once its innards are exposed it will do everything it can to protect itself. All you have to do is destroy it to win the game and rid the land of Chaos.

Simple innit?







As the Soviet Union finally falls to pieces, and the KGB is degraded into nothing more than a Russian Public Relations office, we conclude the complete solution to Virgin's pravda-tastic adventure...

KGB

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 sees you being thrown in at the deep end - literally! The docks are never the driest place to stand, so why not get into the swing of things? In fact, why not leap into the sea? It makes a good a hiding place as any, and if there is one thing you'll do a lot of in chapter 3, it's hiding. Once in the sea, locate the Viktor Mastnev boat - not a difficult task being as this port isn't exactly teeming with life. Climb aboard the boat and find the fish boxes. What are you going to use fish boxes for, you might as well ask. A hiding place! Pop down behind them, wait until the coast is clear, and then make a run for the radio room.

From the radio room, find the rest room. Enter, and have a good search. Make sure you look under the lower bunk. Take everything you find there and go back up on deck. You might spot someone wandering around, and the best way to distract a russian is with alcohol, so throw the rum bottle you found earlier over the port side. For those who aren't in the nautical know, that's the left hand side of the boat. The man will spot the bottle and leap overboard. When he does, pop over to the stern (right hand) deck and dash down to the engine room as quick as you can. Open the closet and - yes, you guessed it - hide.

STILL HIDING

This next section doesn't require you to actually do much, but watch your timing. Come out of hiding too soon, and that's it chum, game over. Wait in the closet until the mechanic comes down. Continue to wait in the closet



KGB



while the captain comes down and the boat gets moving. Resist the temptation to be seasick at this point and wait until the mechanic, known to all at this point as Kapiton, falls asleep as his station. You just can't get the staff these days!

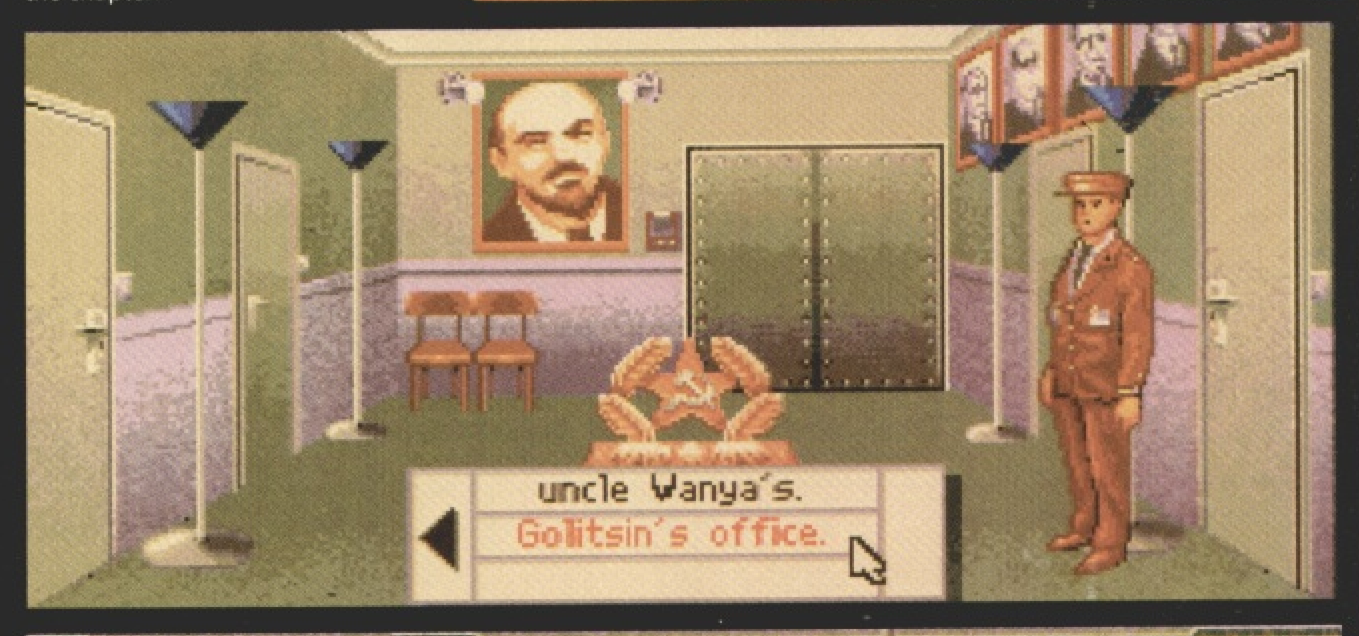
NOW! Leap out of the closet quietly and examine the engine. You'll notice that it isn't working too well. Take the belt from your pocket and use it on the engine to repair it. Who said you could only use a spare pair of tights? Once you are satisfied that everything is running smoothly, climb back into the closet and wait. In fact, wait until nightfall at 9:30 before even considering making a move.

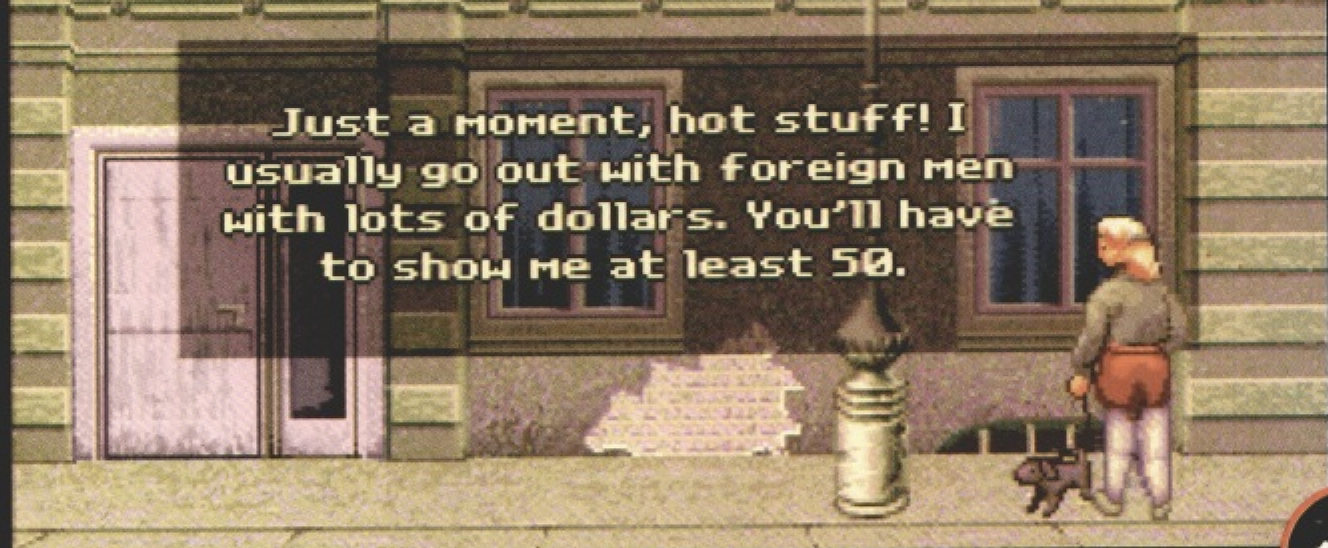
Leave the womb-like safety of your closet and go back on deck. Take a few gulps of air if you feel it necessary and walk to the forward deck. Find those old fish boxes again and hide behind them. At this point, you might be getting a little bored with continually hiding, but supress any temptation to leap out and do an Errol Flynn, as it will only end in tears. Instead, wait behind the fish boxes until midnight.

HIDE SOME MORE

At this point, you will probably find your intensive hiding from absolutely no-one disturbed by everyone walking up onto the deck. Wait for a bit, and listen to what's being said. Watch where everyone goes when they leave, and follow the two men who go down into the radio room. Much to your advantage, they don't bother to look behind them as they go. Watch them go into the rest room, and then listen at the door. This is probably the most exciting thing that will happen in the entire chapter. Once you have heard all they have to say, stagger back on deck and hide once more.

Set your alarm and wait until 6:00 am. Once again everyone comes back on deck (do these people ever get any sleep?) and listen to what is said. Quietly move to the stern deck and wait for the sun to come up. Enjoy the panoramic vista at 6:45 and then settle back for another wait. At 7:30 the Viktor Mastnev comes back into the port. As history repeats itself and everything settles back to normal, you can dive back into the sea and finish the chapter.









CHAPTER 4

Shaking off the drops, as they say, you now make your way to Department 7 as you enter the final chapter of the game. If your fingers aren't trembling with anticipation after you've come this far, you've got stronger nerves than I have. Anyway, once you reach Department 7, you'll be faced with the awful knowledge that the building isn't open yet - yes, you have to wait some more. Thankfully, you only have to wait until 9:15. At that point Agabekov drives out of the Department 7 garage. Whereis he going? Who can say? There's only one sure fire way to find out, and that's to follow him. So, in time honoured tradition, you have to hail a taxi and get him to 'follow that car!'.

A few moments later, you will pull up outside the Psychiatric Institute, where Agabekov has just entered. Enter the institute and when confronted by the ever vigilante guards, show them your ID card. When asked exactly who you are, claim to be Agabekov's collegue - not a complete lie. When you meet the director of the Institute, Lutinov, question him thoroughly.

Once directed, go to room 3. From there, enter the green room and wait. After a short while, the professor will enter and ask you who you are. Tell him you are Rukov, Agabekov's collegue. The professor will introduce himself as Tsibulenko and enter his laboratory. Follow him and when he talks to you, reveal the fact that you are not, in fact, Rukov. The professor will leave and rush into the green room. Peace at last!



Examine the right hand side of the bench and you will find a button. Press it and the doors to the green room will lock, with the hapless professor trapped inside. Now all you need to do is get him to tell you exactly what he knows. There are many ways of doing this if you are a KGB agent, but none of them are catered for in this game, so you might as well just wait him out. Click wait a few times (this does use up a couple of hours of game time) until finally he cracks and shouts "I'll tell you anything!". Now he's yours!

Rather than let him out to question him, a quick scan of the room will reveal a microphone. Talk into the microphone to question Tsibulenko, and ask him questions about the nurse Saneyeva, Protopopov, Agabekov and the patients in rooms













1, 2 and 3. Go into the cabinet and have a look around. Press the button to unlock all the doors and leave the lab.

Go to Room 3, remembering everything that Tsibulenko told you, and talk to Golvbev. Say 'Saliva' and listen to what he has to tell you. Now your work at the institute is done and you can turn your back on the place. Your next port of call is the Hotel Gostinitsa. Outside you'll find a tramp. Chat to him, and he'll respond to your kindness by giving you Yakuchev's address, somewhere on Gorki Street. Thank the tramp and go directly to Gorki Street. Locate Yakuchev's house and enter.

Here you'll meet Greenburg. Ask him if he knows a place called 'The Motherland' and if he knows of a book called 'Memory's Bible' or another called 'The Book Of Death'. Not the most charming titles, I know, but these questions must be asked. He'll show you a bookmark he's found. Have a good look at it and you'll find the address of the gallery. Thank him and leave for Great Patriotic War Street.

Enter the gallery and watch the Manageress. After a short spell, she will wander off to the back of the gallery. As soon as her back is turned, jump into the nearest available closet and hide. Next time you look out of the closet, there will be two women in the gallery. Wait for them to leave and then leave the closet. Switch off the light above the paintings using the switch on the left.

Once safely shrouded in semi-darkness (only the most dramatic descriptions in this magazine, folks) go to the far room. Here you will find a statue bravely clutching a sword. Take the sword and find the letter opener on the desk. Put the letter opener where the sword was and the painting will slide to one side. Go into the secret passage with your stomach in knots and small beads of sweat threading their way down your expectant face and examine the fake Gorbachev you find there.

Suddenly, you hear a noise from the passage! Vovlov and Savinkov are coming! Diving out of the way you see Vovlov kill Savinlov! Vovlov will then turn to you and order you to kill Protopopov, otherwise known as the fake Gorbachev. With all you have seen and learnt in the game up to this point, you should already know that this is an order than can't be followed. Refuse to kill him, and then prick up your ears and you will be able to hear Vanya and Yegor coming down the passageway. A fight breaks out, and Vovlov gets knocked out by Yegor, dropping his gun. Take the weapon and shoot Vovlov. Well, he was asking for it!

Finally, stand back and let the fake Gorbachev make his speech, and that's all there is to it! Well done, you've completed KGB!



CHUCK RO

Son Of Chuck

LEVEL 1

The game starts out with a lengthy trek through the forest broken down into four main sections. This is the best moment to start practising those moves, getting them as close to second nature as you can. It's also an opportunity to start identifying the bonuses and boosts the game has to offer. While walking through level 1.1, pick up everything you can. At one point, you'll come across four breakable blocks. Smash them all with your club and keep hitting the one on the right for more and more points. Halfway through this level, you'll come across a dinosaur so big that only its legs can be seen on screen. Don't worry, you don't have to kill it. Just keep to the right of the screen as it passes over.

On the far side of the telegraph poles, you'll come across a rock and some spikes. Get on the right hand side of the rock and knock it left twice. You can now stand on it and jump onto the telegraph poles, giving you access to loads more goodies!



On level 1.2, the first thing you need to do is walk to the right and free the dinosaur. You can now leap onto its back and ride along to the right. Before too long, you'll come across a few rocks with a milk bottle on them. Jump on these, then jump to the left onto the platforms and run along the telegraph pole. Hit the blocks you come to at the end for an extra life. A good tip on this level is to knock the fire hydrants, which gives you tons of bonus points. Yipee!

Once you reach level 1.3, go underground until you reach a wall of breakable blocks. Destroy every one except the one that sticks out. Save this one, jump onto it and jump up until you find a pile of sweets and milk. Collect all of them and watch that points total skyrocket!

When you come across the lizard's tail, jump on it, and off again as quickly as possible. Try to get onto the top platform and collect all the sweets. The best weapon available here is the fire hydrant, so hit it to get it started, and then leave the level

On the last of these four sections, there isn't a lot to tell you that you don't already know, all thanks to the miracle of consistent gameplay. You'll find a small lizard next to a gap in the scenery. Club it to get it to stick its tongue out, and then walk along its tongue to reach the other side. Jump on the strong man and then hit him to be thrown into the air. When you reach Dan the dinosaur, watch how his head swings in a loop. Stand still until it stops, and then start running. When he smashes his head into the ground, turn and club away like mad. Rinse and repeat as necessary. Now you're on your way to level 2!

LEVEL 2

This is a short but difficult level. Walk along the dinosaur's back until you reach the rubber ring, watching out for the flying fish. When you reach the centre, a huge bird will appear. Leap on its feet, and the dinosaur will sink. Wait for it to rise again, and then drop back onto its hump. Kill the fish left stranded and carry on towards the head.

Once your reach the head, he'll get a little cross (Understatement of the Year 1924) and turn on you. When he looks at you, get out of the way, and when his head comes crashing down, smash his skull in with your club. God, I love violent games! After a couple of hits, he'll fall back into the sea and you can continue on your way.

LEVEL 3

The jungle is full of all sorts of surprises, just like the real thing. For instance, if you walk along to the tree with the banana swing beneath it, climb to the top of it and then walk left, you'll come across four blocks. Jump on them and then jump left onto a hidden platform liberally covered with sweets.

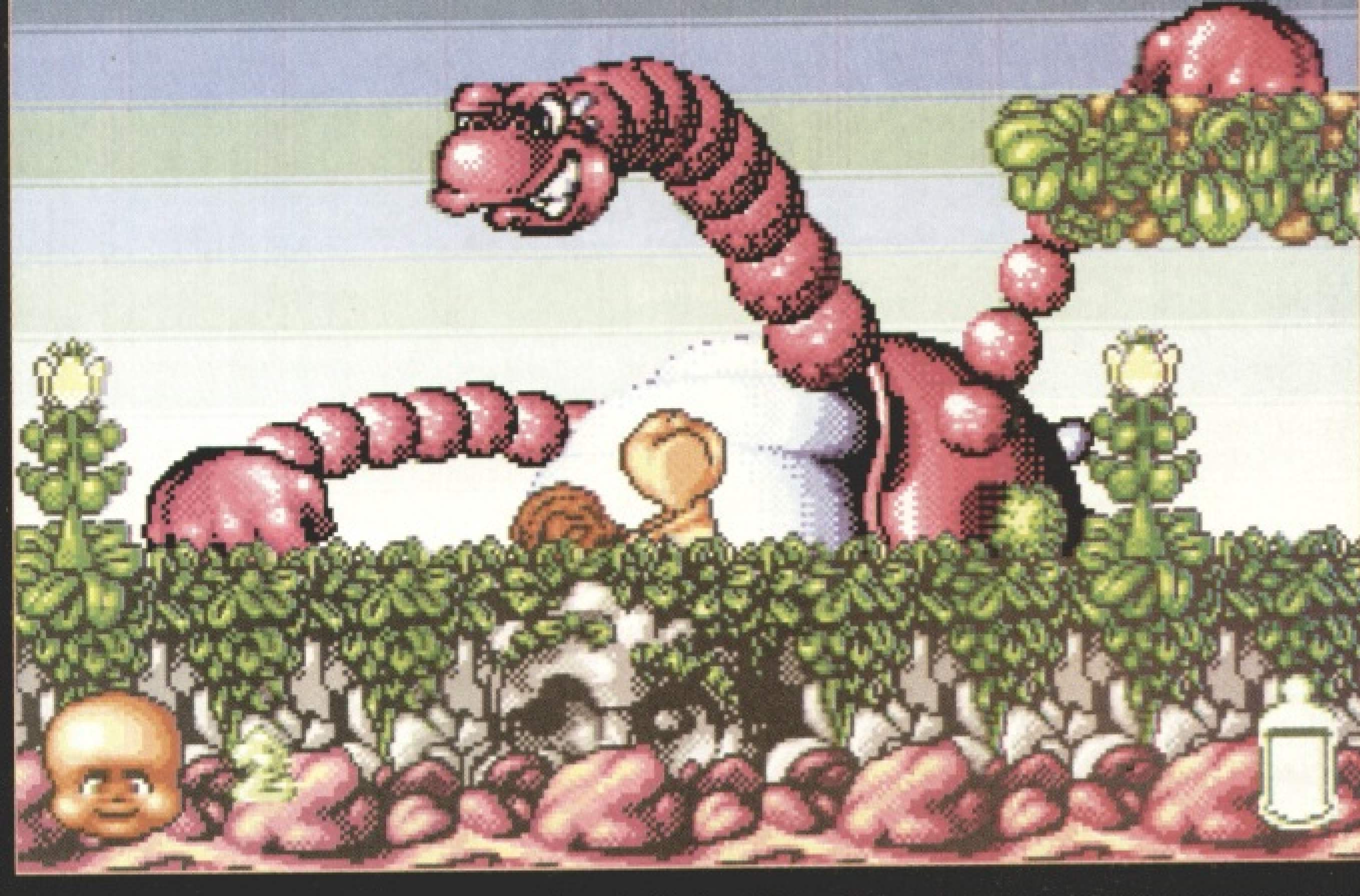
Continuing left, you'll come across an ant. Destroy the blocks nearby and quickly leap onto the back of the ant. He will carry you to the right (remember to duck the bananas thrown at you by the unfriendly monkeys) across the spikes.





CK2

In a world where there seems to be an 'ism' for everything, let's not forget ageism. Core certainly didn't, and here's their guide to getting through their latest hit.



After the second banana swing, walk past the boulder and go underneath the spikes to collect loads of sweets. Jump up to get out and then knock the boulder off the blocks. Jump up to the platform and go right until you reach a monkey. Kill it and it will leave a banana. Hit the banana across to the right until you reach the next monkey and then knock the banana at the monkey. He'll be so pleased to see one so bruised that he'll give you an extra life!

On section 2, hit the banana back to the monkey to the left and then knock it onto the platform with the bird on it. Jump on the monkey's head (remember to ask nicely) and then free the bird by hitting it. (We would like to remind all small children than hitting the family budgie with a large piece of 2 by 4 is a pretty stupid thing to do, no matter how funny it might seem). Climb onto the bird, and use it to jump over the spikes and huge gaps.

When section 3 - the Wacky waterfalls - rears its ugly head, here's what you need to do. Continue as normal until you reach a large gap with some waves washing across it from left to right. Leap on the waves and they will carry you across, but remember to jump off at the end!

After you pass the three water-spitting dinosaurs, jump into the air and you'll appear on some invisible blocks. Do it right first time, or you'll look fairly daft. Jump up, and you'll reach another one of those platforms laden with sweets - sort of a digital version of Simon's pockets.

At the end of the level, Ozric will rise. Avoid him to start with, and move toward him when he sinks. Move out of the way when he rises and then bat the fish back at him when he starts to fall. Repeat this as often as you can bear. When he tries to ram you, move left.



LEVEL 4

Who would have thought you could get this far? If they did, then they're right! The first thing you need to do is get in front of the dog and then walk right to the end of the platform. Leap on the dog when it approaches and then jump to the platform above for some sugary tooth decay. To get over the lava beds, knock the turtle into them, and then ride across on his back.

Finally, in the spooky city, stand on your club to get over the dinosaurs that charge you. To get over the spikes, smash the blocks above them to cause rocks to drop. When in the trees, kill the spiders and climb their webs to reach the top. Before you know it, you'll be facing the final guardian. The main things to watch out for here are the rolling eggs (jump over these) and the flying boulders. As the bird comes for you, jump over it and hit it as you pass. Keep doing this and victory is yours! Right, I'm about ready for Chuck Rock 3 - Pet of Chuck!

Before we go any further, I must let you in on this issue's Tip Of The Month; use grease-proof paper and margarine in your cake tins so that when you've finished cooking you can remove the cake with relative ease. If you have any tips on games, life or making money then send them to me: MR TIPS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU; or FAX me on (071) 972 6710. If I receive any new cheats which I don't know about then expect some software in return. Cheerio-toodle-pip-good-bye and all that!

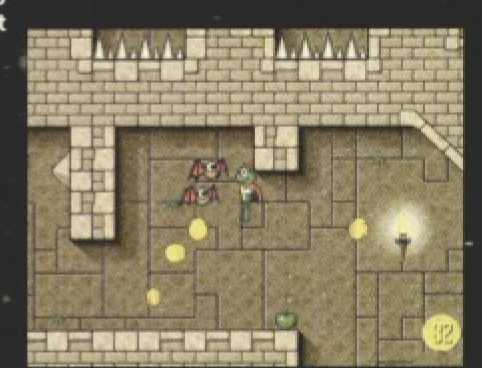
SUPERFROG

Team 17

In our little chat we were having last month, you may remember that I happened to reveal the codes for the first four worlds. You've waited. You've twiddled your thumbs. You've twiddled other people's thumbs. You've gone out of your mind with worry. Now, for the first time ever in Snip Tips, I proudly present... (fanfare, etc) the remaining level codes!!! Don't ever say that we're not good to you...

WORLD 5-1	452234
WORLD 5-2	984841
WORLD 5-3	383772
WORLD 5-4	093152
WORLD 6-1	387211
WORLD 6-2	981122
WORLD 6-3	017632
WORLD 6-4	398112

Well, no. The Being soon discovered that by pressing any number between one and six he could transport the bloke with the blue trousers to a specified level. And, even weirder, that pressing 'W' powered-up the bloke to an awesome level, 'E' whisked the bloke to the end of level Guardian and - even most curiously of all - 'C' granted the Being with infinite continues.



SNIP

ACTION REPLAY TIPS SPECTACULAR!!!

It's big, it's bold, it's brilliant, it's bad, apparently. Yes, the Action Replay Tips Spectacular has returned to dispense handy pokes for those fortunate enough to possess an AR, as they're known to their mates.



GAME	MEMORY ADRESS	EFFECT
AGONY	1B9	LIVES
LOTUS 2	C0B05F	TIME
JAMES POND	TFD1B0	LIVES
	TFD28C	TIME
LAST NINJA 3	2B77F	LIVES
BUGGY BOY	22ACB	TIME
WARZONE	15D65	LIVES
BUBBLE DIZZY	TFD21A	LIVES
BLUES BROTHERS	45C5C	RECORDS
	45C9C	ENERGY
LUPO ALBERTO	220BA	LIVES
TERMINATOR 2	TFD80B4	LIVES
NAVY SEALS	ACCE	LIVES
PACMANIA	TFD53EC	LIVES
PROJECT X	C0B933	LIVES
PUSHOVER	TFD6021	LIVES

ASSASSIN

Team 17

Now here's a little tale which should interest anyone who's having trouble with Team 17's Strider-'em-up. There once was an athletic bloke who wore a blue body suit and he was standing in the first level of a certain platform game. Being an odd sort of fellow, he went to the first tree he could find and climbed to the top left-hand corner of it.

"Oi," he shouted to the Being who was controlling him, "type in 'NICEVIEWFROMUPHEREMATE' with no spaces or I'll duff you in."

The powerful Being who heard the bloke's message immediately did as he was told and the land flashed yellow around the edges a couple of times. The bloke in the blue trousers froze for a while. Realising what he had done, the poweful being pushed 'P' once again and everything was restored to its former moving glory.

Or was it?

THE CHAOS ENGINE

Renegade

Simply loads and loads of people have sent in codes for this one and if I could thank you all personally then I would. Printed below are a selection of one player passwords which should all be advantageous - you'll just have to experiment with them and find out which you prefer to use.

WHX5CD#16ZFN
TTTTTTTTTTTT
NDTPH9NC1PH8
VVVVVVVVVVVV
ZLNQ7K58S6SR
T655NB1YGLMB
XXXXXXXXXXXX
MRZS4RLZ6ZC0
YYYYYYYYYYYY
6YQ3M2#R351
BBKMWQW#8R35
BBJMQWQ#5R35
6UCDXU25S7V2
HHGGFFDDCCBB



HUMANS - THE JURASSIC LEVELS

Mirage

Ummm, sorry fans - I've got a confession to make. Er, y'know the thirty or so level codes I printed a few months back? Well, it appears that I got my release dates wrong (these extra levels are reviewed this issue, in fact) and because I jumped the gun and printed the first thirty, the programmers decided to change them!

Never mind. Listed below you'll find the first thirty codes which work with the Jurassic levels only. More next month



1	DARWIN
2	DOOM
3	SPYDER
4	480
5	BILLS
6	BROKE AGAIN
7	OUR SHELF
8	NO SUPPORT
9	MR PARROT
10	7 MILE WALK
11	BLIZARD
12	MINI EGGS
13	KEEF
14	WORLDOFOUROWN
15	ITS TOSH
16	BESTEST BUDS
17	OO CHILDREN
18	BLUE STUFF
19	LEOPARD
20	ALAN B STARD
21	DANNEEE
22	LOOWEEZ
23	KATIEWOOH
24	RADCLIFFE
25	I DONT LIKE BRAWN
26	GILL NGEDS
27	HOW MUCH
28	THE SLOBS
29	MRS T
30	ALMANBURIE

TIPS

TIPS OF YESTERYEAR

Here's a new part of Snip Tips where we take a nostalgic trip back to days gone by and reacquaint ourselves with some of the great tips which were around when you lot were still in your nappies. This month: Fighter Bomber.

Simply type 'BUCKAROO' on the pilot select screen to play any mission and press 'D' to fly to your next waypoint.

Next month: Thunder Burne

DESERT STRIKE

Electronic Arts

Death. Mutilation. Carnage. What's the world coming to? I don't care because there's nothing I like better than a good game of EA's stunning Megadrive conversion with my great showbiz mates. Clive Dunn turned round to me the other day and wondered whether I could tell him the level codes as he's not very good at the game (arthritis, y'see). Naturally I was more than happy to help, which is why I've decided to share the codes with all of you, my mates.

LEVEL 2	LQJAQRJ
LEVEL 3	TLJJOAQ
LEVEL 4	JTEKOM

BODY BLOWS

Team 17

Thanks to the thousands of readers who have sent this cheat in. I have to confess, though, that I knew this before the last issue was printed and was going to print it then but Dave and Simon wouldn't let me because they were already tipping it, the cads!

It's really annoying when your creativity is restricted by numbskulls, you know. This magazine would be better off without them. Anyway, I'm not bitter at all - here's the cheat.

You need two joysticks for this one. Hold player one's joystick to the left and player two's to the right for about eight seconds. A cheat menu should then appear from which you'll be able to select any of the available options.

LEMMINGS 2

Psygnosis

A number of different people have tried to lie their way into getting a free software prize by sending in several bogus cheats. You know who you are, so don't try and do it again otherwise I'll send all my kids round to sort you out.

Anyway, the official cheat goes something like this: on the initial options screen, move the mouse pointer to the bottom right hand corner of the screen. Then press the LEFT mouse button followed by the RIGHT mouse button. A lemming should then shout "Let's go" and you'll be able to select any level from any tribe, regardless of how many you've completed.

If this doesn't work, try clicking the mouse pointer around all the other corners of the screen.





GAMES SURGERY

Every month, thousands of devout games worshippers make the arduous trek to the shrine of the Games Surgery. There they are met by Doctor David Upchurch, revered and respected throughout all gamesdom as the mystic with the healing tips. Here, then, are just some of those pilgrims' tales...

**Dear Doc,
Please, please help me! About two months ago I bought KGB. I was stuck so you can imagine my delight when I saw the trusty if not brilliant guide in The One. At the end of Chapter 1 I return to Department P and talk to Vovlov, but he says I have failed because I let the American go (as you told me to). No matter what I say he sends me off to some iceberg.**

**I'm not the only one who has this problem, as several of my friends have KGB and they cannot get past this bit either. Help!
David Harrison,
Reading.**

Indeed you are not the only one who has this problem, as many other readers have written in suffering from the same complaint. This is strange because I actually used the tips to get the screenshots. However, I think I know where your problems lie. My guess is that Vovlov sends you to the iceberg for not getting evidence of Verto's activities, right? This is because you have probably played the wrong video tape in Verto's studio. The one lying about is an old black and white movie that's totally irrelevant. However, if you look in the drawer under the TV you'll find a tape showing deeds of a much darker nature. Now when you return to Deaprtment P you'll still get moaned at for letting the American go (assuming you say something like 'He was a pawn in my plans') but the adventure will continue.

**Dear Doc,
A few days ago I purchased the rather excellent LIONHEART. But I have already encountered a small problem. I have reached the end of the airship and jumped onto a swinging platform. But despite trying and trying again I just can't get onto (or into) the airship. Please help if you can!
Jonathan Young,
Coulsdon, Surrey.**

As I tell all my patients, always read the instructions on the bottle or, in your case, in the box. For the solution to your problems lies in the game's manual. What you have to do is pull down when the platform reaches the top of its swing. It's a bit tricky at first but once you have got a bit of momentum going you should be able to leap onto the airship's deck with ease.

**Dear Doctor,
Could you please tell me where to find the flask in LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS?
James Hand,
Aberdeen.**

It's good to see that you begin your letter addressing me by my full professional title. I get so fed up with these scruffy urchins calling me 'Doc'. Anyway, about your problem. It's quite a complicated route to getting the flask. Go to the Forge and talk to Luthern. While you're there get the tinderbox. Now find and talk to Malin and agree to do what he asks. Go to the Village Shop and give the metal bar to Ewan. In return you'll get a gem and twelve groats. Go to the Magpie Tavern and give the gem to Nellie and then you'll get the flask. You can now use this flask with the apparatus in Taidgh's house to make a special potion to protect you from the Skorl. Though quite how you do it is another matter entirely...

**Dear Doc,
I have got R-TYPE and I am having great difficulty in completing it. Please, have you got a cheat that can help me?
Mark Page,
Mickleton.**

Indeed, I have. However, you'll need to put in a bit of hard work before you can use it. Thing to do is blast away until you're good enough to get onto the high-score table. Then type in your name as SIMATRA. When you start playing again you should have infinite lives! Good, eh?

**Dear Doc,
Please could you help me. In THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND I've been to the three pirates who have told me about the trials and I can get the idol but I would like to know where the helmet is so that I can go in the cannon.
Daniel Lamb,
Bristol.**

Oh, Daniel. You can work out how to get the idol but you can't work out how to get a helmet? Really! What you need to perform is a bit of lateral thinking. If you go into the kitchen at the inn (you'll need to wait until the cook has wandered off before you can do this) you'll find a metal cooking pot. This will function perfectly well as a helmet. There you go.

**Dear Doc,
I have had APIDYA for well over a year now and I still can't finish it. It's just too hard and I was wondering if you could help by giving me a cheat for it?
Michael.**

Well, 'Michael' of no fixed abode, I can't help you with a cheat as there isn't one, apparently. However, I can give you level codes which'll let you see some more of the game. Try typing in the following on the title screen to skip to the various stages. You'll start with a fair selection of power-ups so you should be able to get quite a way into the game.

Stage 2
MISSHONEYBEE
Stage 3
DEPUTYOFLOVE
Stage 4
HASTALAVISTA
Stage 5
SNEAKPREVIEW
Finale
SHOWCREDITS [& RETURN key]

**Dear Doc,
I don't know if you'll remember this one. It's called SUPREMACY and I bought it ages ago. Thing is, although I shouldn't think there's a month goes by that I don't play it, I've still yet to beat it. Have you get any tips or cheats?
Malcolm Hunt,
Southend.**

Of course I remember it - and a damn fine game it was too, if memory serves correctly. Here's a little cheat of sorts that might help. If you're in desperate need of cash, go to the information screen and wait for your population to rise. Put your tax rate up to 100% then, as soon as your credits increase, put the tax rate down to zero. You'll have to be quick to make it work, but pull it off and you'll have pots of money AND an increasing population!

THE SURGERY IS NOW CLOSED!

If you have a persistent gaming complaint then why not write to me at: Doctor David's Games Surgery, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. I try to print as many letters as possible but due to the sheer volume I receive it's impossible to answer everybody's problems. Please remember that I can't reply to queries personally either in writing or over the phone. I'm a busy man, you know!

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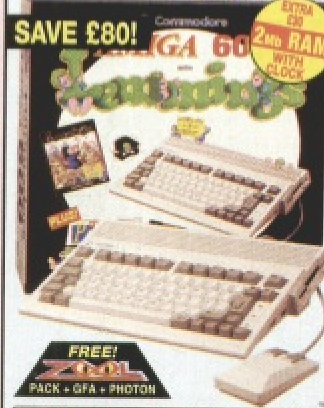
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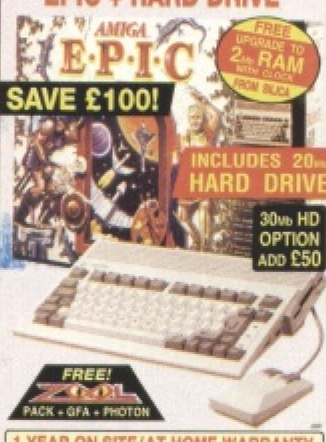
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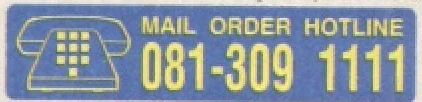
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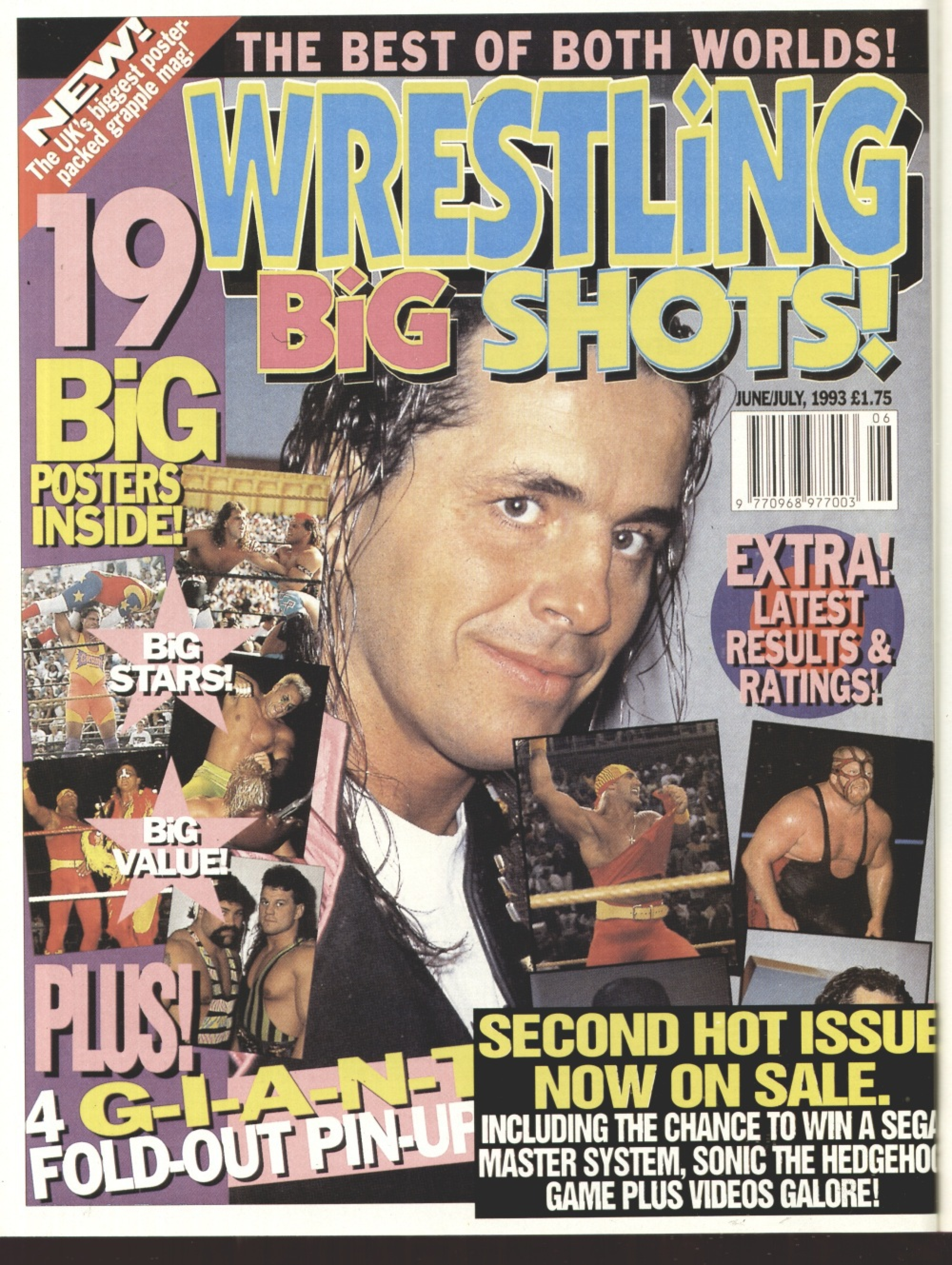
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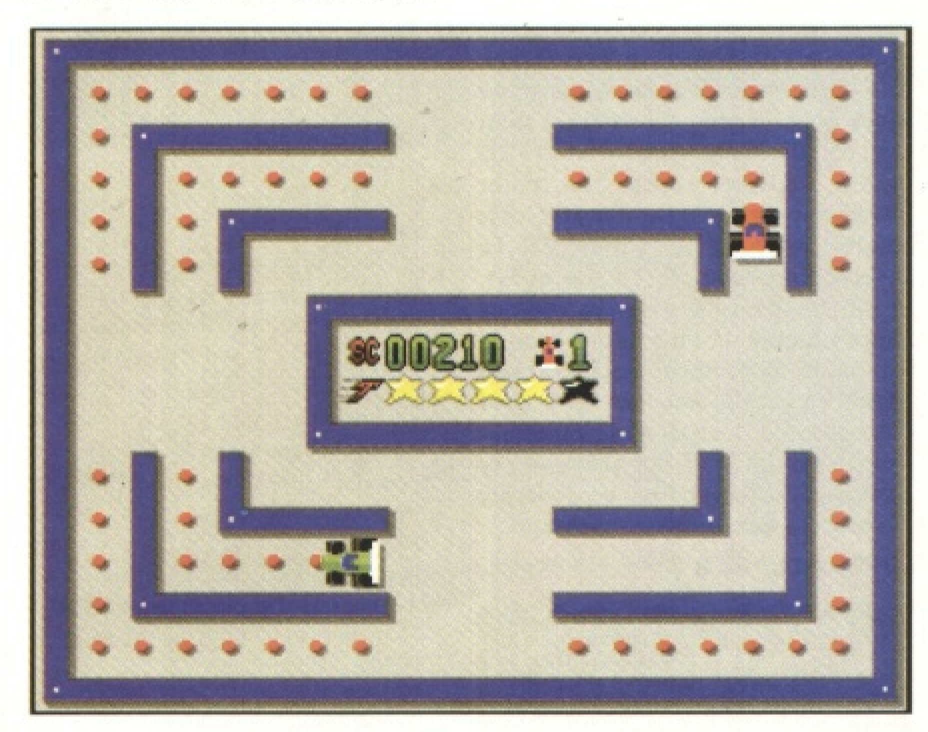
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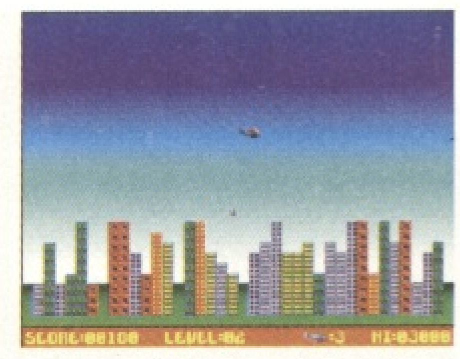
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CAR WARS

Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 54.

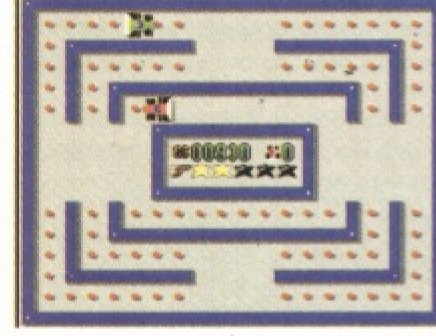
Car Wars is another ancient arcade game given the PD treatment, and it works surprisingly well. Playing as a dot-hungry car (?) your task is to race around a maze and clear the screen of balls before moving onto the next level. If you're thinking that Car Wars sounds a lot like Pacman then you're right in some ways but there are a few additional gameplay elements which ensure that the only similarities are eating dots, racing around a maze and avoiding harmful 'creatures' before leaving the screen and entering a different maze layout.

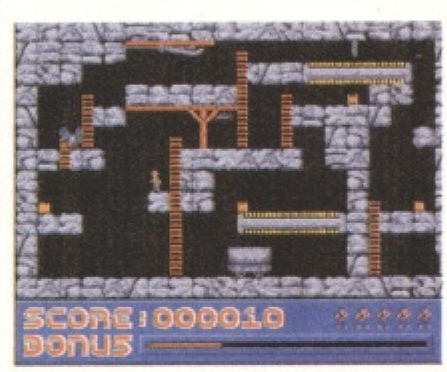
No, really, it's not Pacman at all. Your car isn't as manoeuvrable as the guzzling yellow semi-circle as it can only move in an anti-clockwise direction. Whenever gaps appear in the maze walls you can switch lanes and race along another track. You begin the game with five turbo-boosts which accelerate your vehicle for a short period of time.

And that's all there is to it. Oh, sorry, I nearly forgot the trivial matter of the opposing car. It races around the track in a clockwise direction, doing its damndest to get in your way. To describe this machine as a kamikaze would be an understatement - anyone would think there was a Lemming at the steering wheel.

Car Wars may not look like much but there's some cracking gameplay underneath. As there's no time limit, you can concentrate on fooling the computer car so there's quite a lot of thinking to be done. Car Wars may ultimately become a little boring as there's not really that much variety but until then who cares?

OVERALL: 83%





AMOS GAMES DISK

17 Bit, disk 2552.

I understand that the title of this disk is a little off-putting (after all, when was the last time you saw a decent AMOS game?) but the collection of games on this disk are all well above average. Except for Solitaire but I'll not mention it again.

If you play through the games in the order they're presented in the disk's menu, the first one you'll come across is Glassback which is a Manic Miner-style platform game with one major difference; your character can't jump, which is quite strange. Still, I'll forgive it because the game moves at quite a speed and is mildly challenging without being too frustrating.

Next comes Snakebyte, one of those games where you get to play a snake thingy that increases in length every time it gobbles up a frog. It's a bit like those Tron light-cycle games but without an opposing bike, though you have your work cut out trying to avoid all the other obstacles without having to fend off the attentions of another snake.

We'll skip the next game in chronological order and arrive swiftly at Bomber, one of the oldest game forms known to man. You're the pilot of a plane which needs to make a crash landing right where a city lies. Your objective is to level the metropolis (by using your infinite supply of bombs) and thus create a flat runway on which to park your plane. It's worth a look for the nostalgia value if you've played this sort of thing before.

Finally we stumble across a weird and scary program which shouldn't be loaded by anyone with a weak heart. By inputting the answers to a series of questions, Life Expectancy will tell you at what age you will finally pop your clogs. Charming!

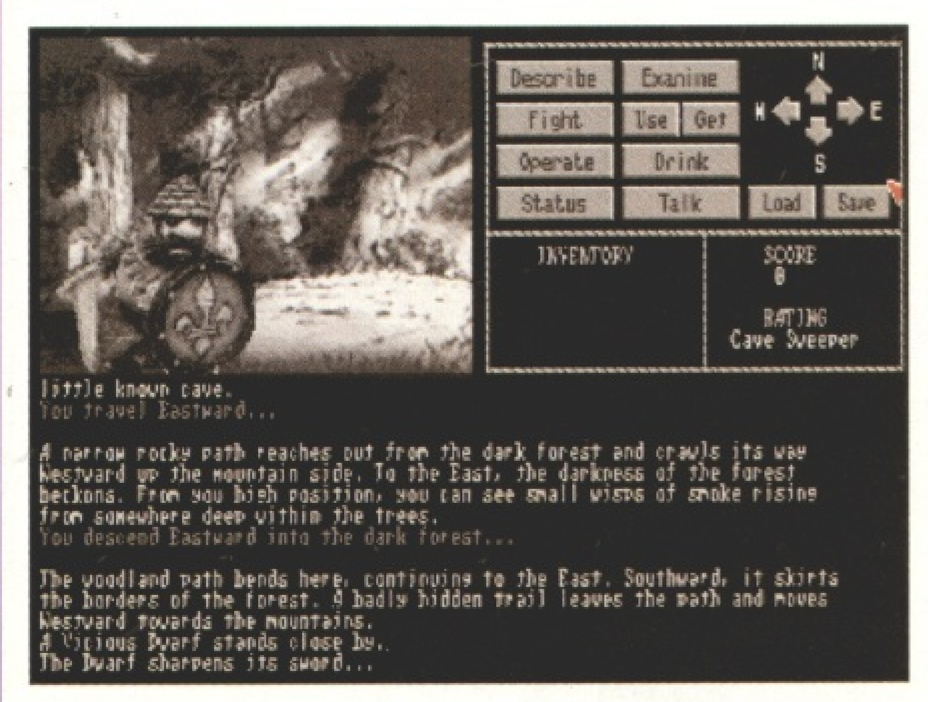
AMOS Games is, as you can see, packed with a range of programs, at least half of which should appeal to most gamers (apart from you-know-what, which will appeal to no-one), representing tremendous value for money.

OVERALL: 88%

CALLING ALL PROGRAMMERS!

Many programmers out there may be wondering how to get their games/slideshows/ utilities accepted into a Public Domain Library. Well, it's as simple as this: first of all, write a game which you think will be of interest to other Amiga owners. Then save it out to one of those floppy disk things, stick it in an envelope along with a covering letter, attach a gummed picture of the Queen's head to the front, scrawl the address of the PD Library you'd like your work to be included in and (here's the hard part) stick the package in a red pillar box. Easy so-called peasy, eh?

Writing PD games is a good way of getting your name known around the programming world so it can be a worthwhile exercise if you're after a job in the industry. And as a special added bonus, Gary at Fortiss PD has decided that any game deemed good enough for him to include on a future Assassins disk will receive a free piece of Public Domain for his/her troubles. If your game isn't good enough, though, you're still onto a winner because Gary will send you a Fortiss PD catalogue disk for your troubles. The address is shown elsewhere on the page.



TALISMAN

17 Bit, disks 2289A/B (2Mb only).

Talisman is odd in two ways. First of all it's a PD graphic adventure and second, it's an unashamed early eighties game. What do I mean by that? Well, let me tell you (as if you can't see from the screenshots) - the majority of the game is spent inputting instructions via an extremely simple interface. Well, okay, so the antiquated adventures didn't have an interface as such but the commands in Talisman (east, west, look... you know the sort of thing) are reminiscent of the instructions you'd type into a Scott Adams or Level 9 text-only game.

Of course, the major difference here are the atmospheric black and white digitised pics which accompany most locations but the game engine remains basically unchanged. It's here that the game falls flat as there really isn't a lot of object manipulation and the majority of the problems are solved by finding an object and using it at a particular point in the adventure.

This really shouldn't be too bad a thing but in the days of intelligent point-n'-click interfaces, gamers have come to expect a little more from their adventures. Still, as a PD game which will only set you back three and a half quid, you can't complain. It's large enough to provide a few days of solid play - tons more than you could usually hope for from a PD game - but, of course the major sticking point will be the fact that there isn't much to come back to once you've completed the quest.

At the end of the day you've got to ask yourself how much you're prepared to compromise and if you don't expect too much in the way of complicated puzzles and non-linear routes (and you've got the memory to run the game) then you simply cannot go wrong with Talisman.

OVERALL: 86%

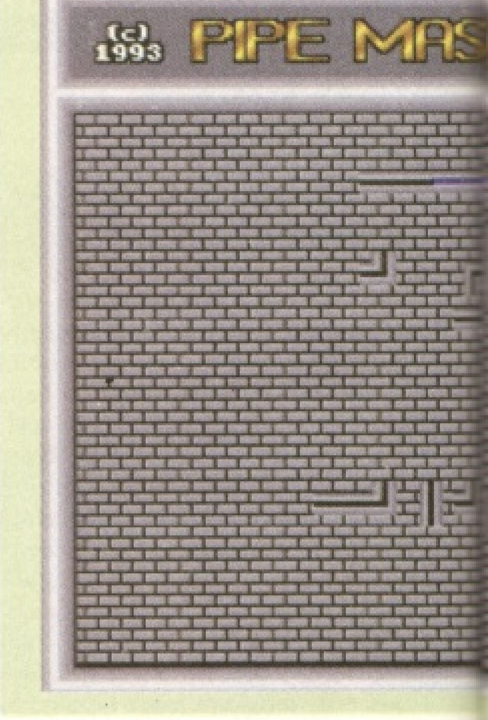


PIPE MASTER

Fortiss PD, Assassins Disk 60.

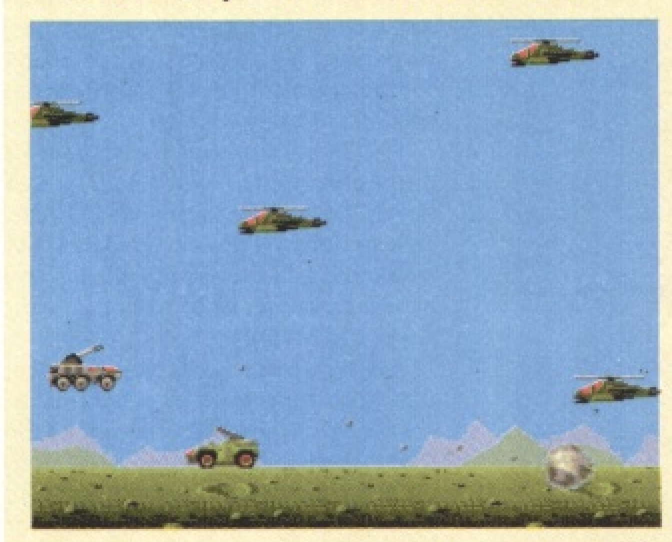
I can sum this two-hundred word review up in just one: Pipemania (as if you hadn't realised). Those of you familiar with the supposed classic will instantly be able to pick up Pipe Master and play away, the only real difference being that there is a permanent start point where the flooz begins its journey.

There's not a great deal else that can be said about the gameplay and you can't fault the implementation, so if you are a fan of Pipemania then you'll no doubt enjoy this. Personally I find the game far too frustrating for its own good, as anyone who read my budget review of the original version will know. I don't mind a bit of a challenge but there really doesn't seem to be much skill involved as the pieces are picked at



VELCRO GRUB

Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 53.



It's not often you find a PD Silkworm game and it's even rarer to come across a good one so it comes as no surprise to discover that Velcro Grub doesn't break any rules.

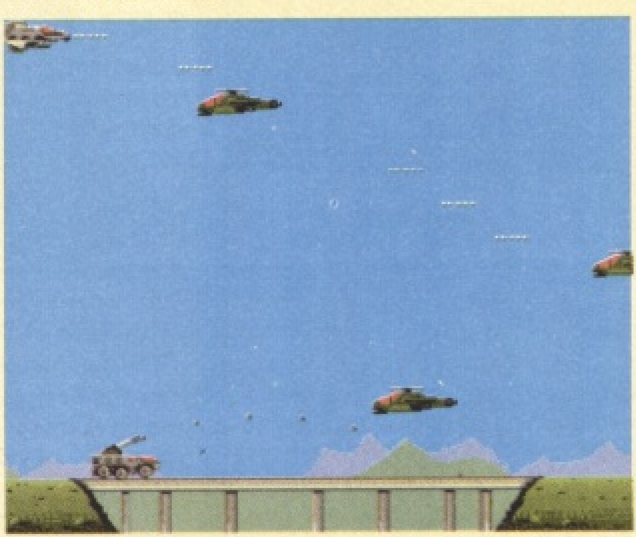
The first few milliseconds of play give the false impression that Velcro Grub is fairly enjoyable. You get to command a jeep which possess the curious ability of being able to leap (presumably because jeep and leap rhyme - I'm just thankful that you don't drive a truck) and if a mate happens to be passing by as you begin a game then he/she can fly a plane. The idea is, I think, simply to waste as many of the enemy jeeps and planes as possible.

Fair enough, but what's the gameplay like? Good question - I'm glad you asked. Basically, if you're playing on your own (as the jeep, remember?), the tactics boil down to a mixture of keeping your finger on the fire button and keeping your finger on the firebutton. Yes, it's as simple as that, really.

Okay, so the plane gets more of a task because things can creep up on him from below but when you add the fact that the 'scrolly' landscape keeps repeating during play (a bit like those tacky American cartoons) and there's no on-screen indication of how you're doing or how many lives are remaining, you can see that this is a game which is going nowhere.

Free-of-challenge isn't exactly a recipe for a fulfilling and satisfying gaming meal so my advice to you would be to go hungry.

OVERALL: 49%

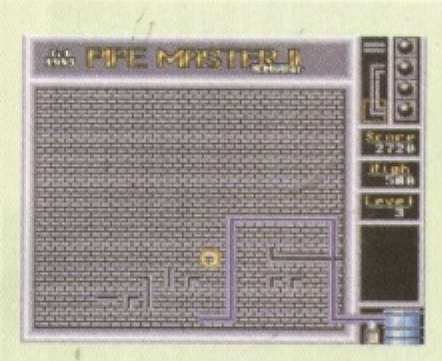


LESS AVUM!!!

There's some high quality stuff in this month's PD Zone and no doubt you'll be wanting to lay your grubby little mitts on them. If that's the case then either write to or ring up one of the thoroughly nice companies below.

• 17 BIT SOFTWARE
1st Floor Offices, 2/8 Market Street, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF1 1DH. Telephone: (0924) 366982

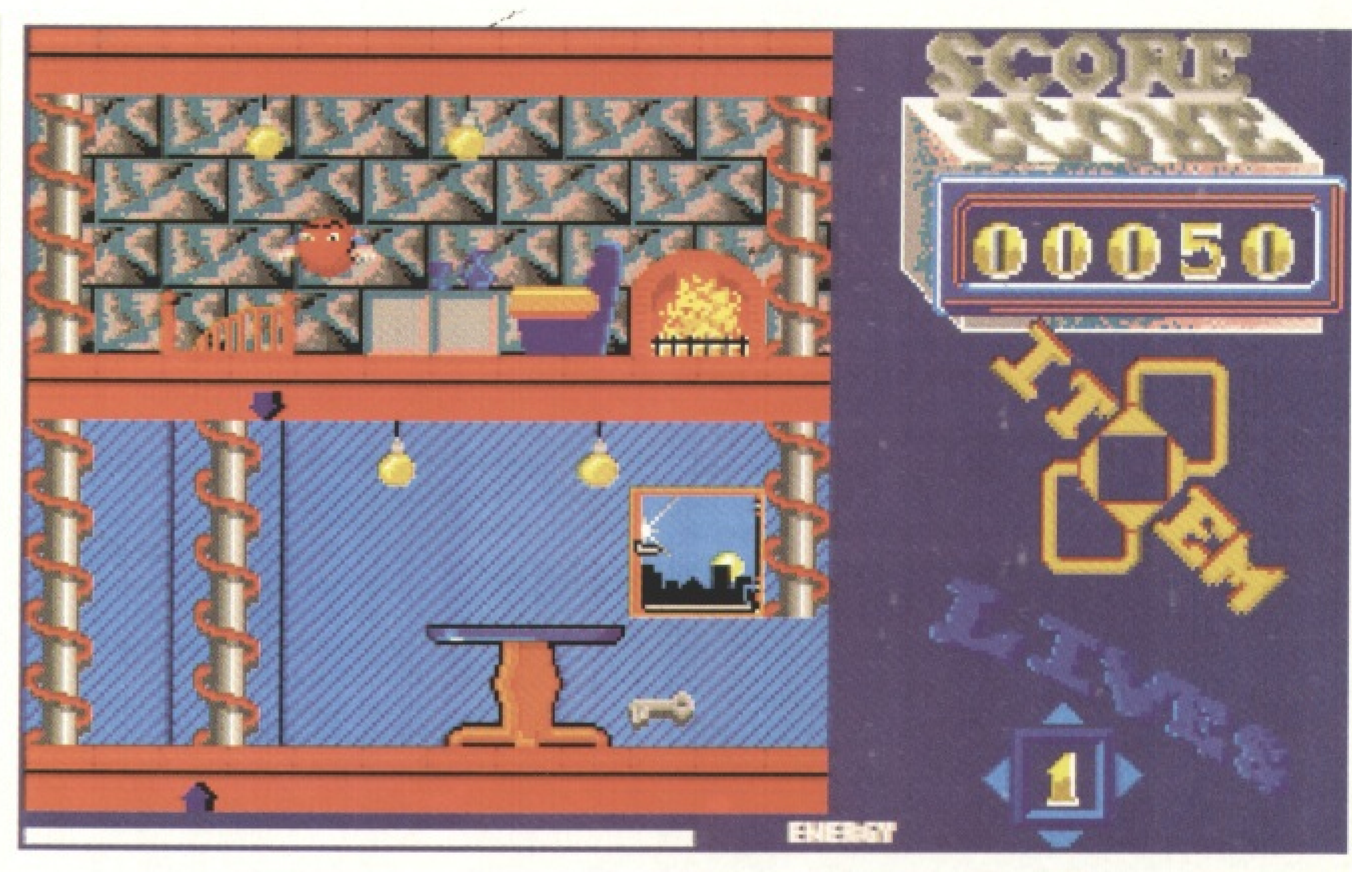
• FORTISS PD
PO Box 2, Earl Shilton, Leicester LE9 8LU. Telephone: (0455) 850984

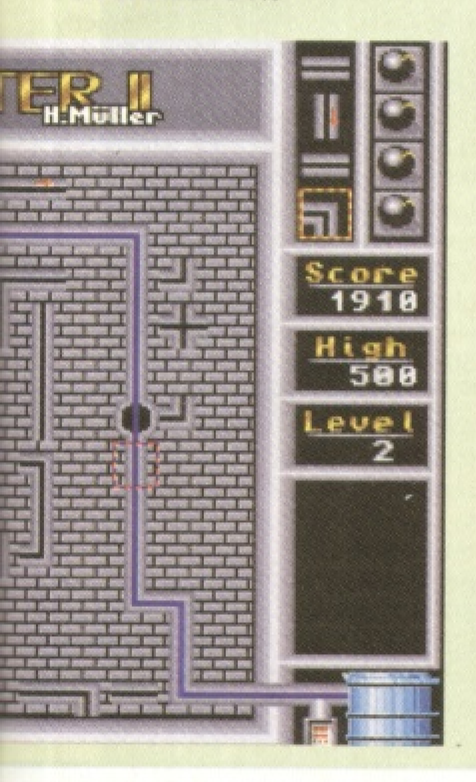


random, making track building nothing more than pure guesswork. And there's a certain square which doesn't appear as often as the others, the cheats!

This is one of those games you'll either love or hate but I suspect that anyone who does love it will already have snapped up Pipemania at budget price. Still, it doesn't cost much so if you're new to this type of game and do find the game annoying then you haven't lost much.

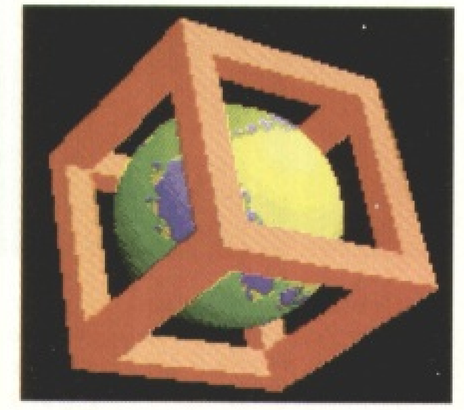
OVERALL: 64%





THE 17 BIT COLLECTION

17 Bit, £40.99 (inc. P&P).

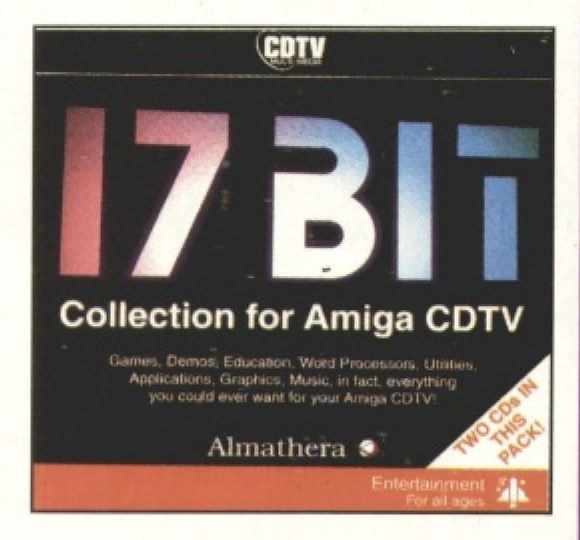


How much money would 2300 public domain disks set you back? The cheapest you could pick them up for would be 80p each (if you were lucky) so 2300 would cost, let's see, something in the region of £1840.

Not really! No, now 17 Bit Software have collated together their first 2301 disks and plonked them on two CDs so that owners of CDTVs or A570s can have access to them. Once you've inserted either 'Golden Oldies' or 'The Latest Batch', a menu will appear with a list of all the programs on that CD. Clicking on the titles calls up a brief description of the disk (complete with awful puns and the odd spelling mistakes) and if you fancy the sound of it then insert a disk into the floppy drive (yes, you need an external drive, CDTV owners) and away you go. After a few short moments you'll be presented with exactly the same disk you would have received if you'd sent cash of to 17 Bit. It's a shame that you can't use the programs directly from the CD but at least this means that you'll be able to swap PD programs with your mates.

Virtually every game-form known to man is included on the collection and you'll find definitive versions of most arcade games from text adventures to Space Invaders, along with billions of other game-types which could only survive on the PD circuit. Whatever you're interested in, I'll guarantee there's something for you.

This collection also provides the ideal opportunity for you to discover other areas of interest such as music and art. If you used to own a C64 then you'll lap up the four disks which contain virtually every tune written for the baby Commodore machine. Musicians will welcome the hundreds of sampled instruments which put in an appearance along with numerous music disks written by established composers (Allister Brimble's disks are brilliant as usual). Mega Demos are a good way of showing your mates exactly how powerful the Amiga is and there are hundreds of the blighters, some of which occupy four or five floppy disks! Clip art always comes in handy with Deluxe Paint and other art packages and you'll find every image you could possibly wish for on one of the two CDs.



As you can see, there really is a superb variety of programs - I honestly can't stress that enough. You may find a few compatibility problems (after all, some of the games/utilities are getting on a bit) but the majority of disks I tried out worked fine although the packaging does stress that some programs won't work on the CDTV, which I find a little odd.

If you have the hardware to run these CDs and you're interested in the public domain scene then you should snap this up before Seventeen Bit realise their mistake and up the price.

OVERALL: 98%



SYSTEM DEFENDER

17 Bit, disk 2547.

As far as I'm concerned, THE best defender game available for the Amiga is the excellent Oblivion which we gave away a couple of months ago. System Defender isn't a patch on Oblivion, but it's still good fun to play none-the-less.

Rather than concentrating on keeping the graphical feel of the arcade original, the team behind System Defender have significantly jazzed up the background visuals. And very impressive they look too - there's an excellent moon which scrolls by occasionally and the lunar landscape is brilliant. But by concentrating so much on what's going on behind the action, they seem to have neglected the sprites which are fairly badly drawn and look out of place in front of the groovy backdrops.



Control-wise, the game could have been tightened up just a touch as it feels sluggish when you need to perform some complex manoeuvres, making level completing slightly harder than it should be. Oh, and the smart bombs aren't very impressive, in a not-a-lot-happens-when-you-tap-the-spacebar kind of way.



Apart from that, everything else is as it should be. The attack waves build up nicely, with a well-judged difficulty curve which ensures that you can get your teeth into the game on your first go. System Defender is by no means perfect so if you enjoyed Oblivion then you're likely to be disappointed but if you accept its mild shortcomings then you're in for a good blast.

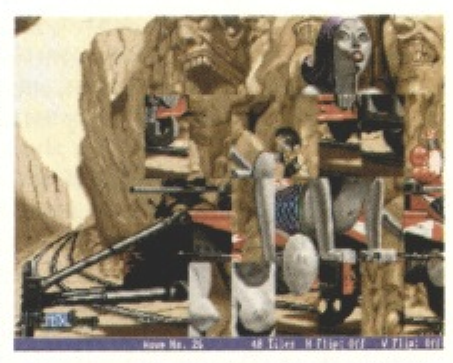
OVERALL: 73%

PICTURE PUZZLE

17 Bit, disk 2498.

Here's an interesting little time waster which doesn't pretend to be anything flash or revolutionary. It's a puzzle game and - yes! - it's got pictures in it. You get to pick an illustration from a list of, oooh, quite a few, select how many squares you want it divided into and then, as if by magic, the program re-jiggles the picture and hands over to you.

There's no real scoring system - just a simple moves counter which increases every time you pick up a tile so you're competing against yourself and nothing else. If you do get stuck



then pressing Help calls up the finished picture so you can see exactly what image you're working towards (the computerised equivalent of looking at the jigsaw box).

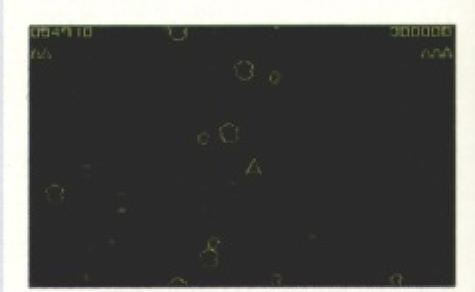


Picture Puzzle has-n't got any real thrills or neat programming tricks but then again it doesn't need to. Everything is presented in a neat fashion and there are no annoying delays. Of course, this kind of program is ideally suited to younger viewers but (and call me odd if you like) I found it strangely relaxing and just the thing to unwind with after a long day's Sensi playing. Many of you will hate this game because of its relative lack of excitement but it just goes to show what a sad world we live in.

OVERALL: 76%

ASTEROIDS

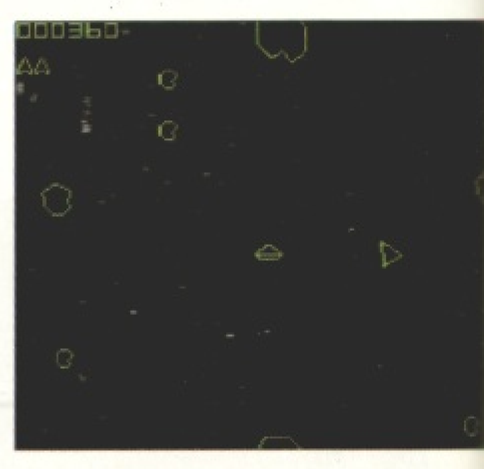
Fortiss PD, Assassins disk 55.



Hey! Guess what, everybody? This is a faithful representation of the old Atari coin-op classic Asteroids! Yeah, unbelievable, I know. Before you even think about buying this, you need to ask yourself one important question. Do you really need another Asteroids clone?

If the answer is yes then you'd be advised to snap this up. It's exactly the same as the original version in virtually every way. The wire frame graphics move smoothly enough, the attack waves are accurately implemented (the alien spacecraft turn up with frightening regularity) and there's even a lack of joystick option (they used 'keys' in the olden days, you see) so the hardened Asteroids player will feel completely at home.

The sound effects are sampled from the coin-op so if you're looking for an almost 'perfect conversion' then you can't go wrong here. In fact, the only difference between the arcade machine and this home computer version is the tediously displayed shareware message which appears when you load the game (incidentally, it'll cost you a fiver if you register).



However, if you've already got an almost 'perfect conversion' (and let's face it, there are plenty to choose from) or are looking for a modernised Asteroids then you'd be advised to look for something different.

OVERALL: 72%


GET READY 4 THE INVASION
COMIC RELIEF HAVE AT LAST GRASPED THE FACT THAT ALL THE PEOPLE WORTH COMMUNICATING WITH THESE DAYS BUY COMPUTER GAMES - AND IT'S A REVELATION WHICH THEY HOPE IS GOING TO MAKE THEM A BLOOMING FORTUNE TO PLOUGH INTO BRILLIANT PROJECTS IN AFRICA AND THE UK.
SLEEP WALKER
PLAY THE GAME FOR...
COMIC RELIEF
HERE ARE SOME IDEAS ON HOW YOU CAN GET ONTO THE SLEEPWALKER SPONSORSHIP TRAIL:
BUY SLEEPWALKER - A DECISION YOU WILL NEVER REGRET - THE GAME IS VOICED BY LENNY HENRY, AND WORKED ON BY SOME OF BRITAIN'S FINEST COMIC MINDS (and a couple of gits who happened to be round that evening). FOR EVERY GAME BOUGHT £4.32 GOES TO COMIC RELIEF TAKE PART IN THE GREAT SLEEPWALKER CHALLENGE, WHICH WILL BE INVADING ALL THE BIG RETAIL CHAINS DURING THE WEEKS BEFORE RED NOSE DAY - MARCH 12th 1993. ORGANISE YOUR OWN SPONSORSHIP CHALLENGES LIKE: BEATING YOUR HIGHEST SCORE - TAKE ON YOUR DAD, OR YOUR TEACHER, OR EVEN YOUR SCHOOL IN A SLEEPWALKER CONTEST. DREAM UP YOUR OWN HIDEOUS CHALLENGE TO HARRANGUE YOUR FRIENDS.
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Diary of a Game 1

ALIEN BREED 2

Alien Breed 2 has to be the most eagerly-awaited sequel in development. Last month Martyn Brown, Team 17's project co-ordinator, told you all about his hopes and dreams for the game and now he's your host for this, the first part of the diary itself. Over the coming months you'll share the Team's trials and tribulations as the story slowly evolves of how a super-sequel is born. We don't want to hammer it home but remember - you'll only find this diary EXCLUSIVELY in The One. Anyway, take it away Martyn...

THE MONTH IN BRIEF

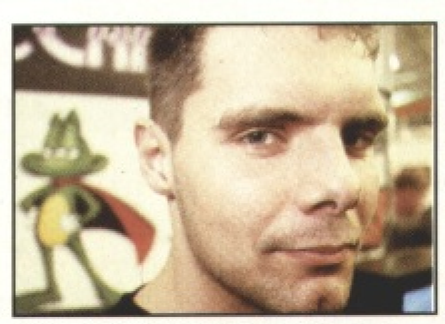
It's been a very strange month. The whole project kicked off approximately four to five weeks behind schedule due to Superfrog running late and this has meant that there haven't been any stunning advances so far. We've been developing the game for about four weeks now. We 'storyboarded' the game at the European Computer Trade Show in early April [see last month's issue of The One] and since then it's been a case of progressing with the initial (and rather boring) parts of the game. As to what everyone is doing, it's this..



RICO HOLMES (Graphics)

Rico is doing lots of sketches and try-outs, checking to see the best colour ranges to use bearing in mind that the game should (if at allpossible) look very similar on the A500/600. This is proving easier than we first thought because of careful colour selection - check the mock 32-colour graphics examples if you don't believe us!

The easiest way to work has been to take the old graphics and draw over them, gradually improving them and creating a more futuristic look. We decided quite a long time ago that we wanted AB2 to retain the look and feel of the old game because we felt that as so many people liked the original it would be crazy to make too many drastic changes. Or rather that's what Rico would have been doing all this all month if his A4000 hadn't died... Anyway, you can all look forward to many more graphics next month as it's all working fine and dandy now.



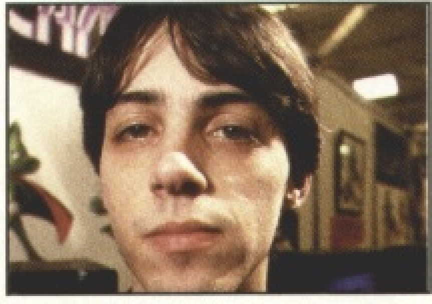
ANDREAS TADIC (Code)

Besides his continual alcohol abuse, Andreas has been busy writing his new mapping program which will be used for creating the game's maps (some surprise, huh?). He's had to do a compete rewrite, coding the editor on his A1200 so that it will accept the new AA graphics modes - rather important for the A1200 version of the maps.

This has been going slower than anticipated as his shiny new 5Mb A1230 Turbo card has also gone down. The A1230 Turbo card makes the A1200 go a rather splendid 7mips (million instructions per second) which is a pleasing 12x the speed of a standard A500 or 1.5x the speed of the A3000.

I asked Andreas to send us a piccy of the new map editor but unfortunately it was so mind-bendingly uninteresting that we don't feel it's worth showing. Maybe next time we can show it in action, manipulating some lovely AA graphics.

As soon as the editor is finished basic mapping will begin and Andreas will work on his 'sprite playfield' idea for the A1200. The majority of the routines/code for the A500 version already exist and won't take too long to get running. He will also play with the zooming/scaling ideas and see how far that gets before we decide to implement it.



ALLISTER BRIMBLE (Sound)

At such an early stage there has been nothing for Allister to do except admire his lovely local Devonshire sheep and ride about in his shiny new Porsche 924 - flash git! At this point, myself, Rico and Andreas wonder how the hell the sound guy ends up with a flash car while we still use the bus...



MARTYN BROWN (Project co-ordination)

I've had the job of correlating the 'storyboard' we decided upon at the ECTS and producing some sort of script and mission ideas to use in the finished game. I'm still in the process of producing this text but after I've done that I'll write a sort of short novella which will tell the whole story from start to end, then it'll will be as if we are converting a film onto the Amiga, trying to recreate the unfolding story in the game.

Actually, I'm quite pleased with the ideas so far and I think the game will play much better with a cohesive and constructed plot, with set goals along the way. The atmosphere of the game is everything and we want to create a believable place, where you can visualise all the storylines and really get into it, much more than people did with the original.

We've settled on the players being able to select two characters

from four. Two will be the original Johnson and Stone (you wouldn't believe the affinity people have for these characters) and the others are an advanced robot bio-form and an alien lizard-type creature. Obviously we want each of the characters to behave differently and be able to do different things, much akin to the old Gauntlet game. I've also had the joyous task of informing all the press about our AB2 activities and getting this diary thing together.

BACK AT H.Q. (Packaging, marketing, etc.)

It's been all quiet on this front, too. It's far too early to start making noises about the game on the sales front and a little bit too early to start package design. We've had a few thoughts about how we will do things on the packaging but as soon as we have any preliminary sketches you'll see them first!

We still get calls every day about when the game will be coming out and even received a threat from a guy in Leeds - he had the impression that the game will not be coming out on the A500. This is definitely NOT the case and all Breed fans with A500s and 600s can rest assured that they will be fighting off bugs alongside the A1200 owners. We aim to release both versions of the game at the same time.



This early mock-up, reusing old Alien Breed 1 monster graphics overlaid on top of one of the new backgrounds gives you some idea of how the final game will look, except totally different.

AND NOW... THE DIARY!

Sunday April 4th

First day of the ECTS at the Business Design Centre in Islington. Absolutely rushed off our feet attending to press demands, business meetings and fending off the rather splendid (if pricey) bar.

Andreas and Rico arrived in the evening and along with the Team 17 guys at the show (Steve, Andy, Junior and myself) have a few beers and an Indian meal in Hampstead. I got a bowl of rice dropped down my back and the restaurant paid for all the beers as an apology. Mighty cheers ring around Hampstead that evening even though I have to spend the following days finding rice in my underwear.

Myself, Andreas, Rico and Junior spent about six hours rolling around laughing into the early hours after drinking half a bottle of potent Swedish vodka, laughing mostly at the expense of Allister (who hadn't arrived yet); we discovered that his hotel room had woolly blankets which gave us excellent value for money with the Allister/sheep jokes.

Despite Andreas and Junior nearly having heart attacks due to incessant laughing and Andy having his photo taken clutching a teapot whilst asleep and at the mercy of the rest of us, we had a good evening. Prior to all this we storyboarded Alien Breed 2 and settled on what we were doing, so we did get some work done.

Monday April 5th

Spend the day gathering recruits for our own Team 17 bash to be held around Islington in the evening. We bumped into The One's Dave and Simon in a flash restaurant (the Islington Kentucky), with Dave seemingly disappointed with Rico's appearances. "I just thought he'd have black hair and be taller," says a disillusioned Dave Upchurch. It's a sad day.

This day, the middle ECTS day, had been hailed as 'the mother of all piss-ups' and the next morning we enjoyed its sequel; 'the mother of all hangovers'. We had always planned to visit the Swedish development team Digital Illusions [Pinball Dreams and Fantasies] when I was in Sweden and it was to some surprise that we bumped into them in The Steam Passage pub in Islington.

The rest of the night is history and Olaf (DI's sound guy) stayed with us and helped us drink the hotel dry. We nearly got thrown out and generally acted like hooligans - oh, how our mothers would be ashamed of us if only they knew...

Tuesday April 6th

Spend most of the day wandering around clutching our heads, swearing never to drink again. All the Team 17 guys leave and head back to their homes. We fondly remember that this was the first time that every member of the Team 17 development crew had been together.

Wednesday April 7th

The Swedish department arrive back home and development continues at more of a crawl than a walk... Andreas fits his new A1230 Turbo accelerator card to hit A1200. Wow! Speed...

Thursday April 8th

Rico's Opalvision arrives for his A4000. This means that he can draw absolutely fantastic 24-bit graphics and not use them on the A500 version! This should really speed up development of the 256-colour graphics and it also means he can do some mind-blowing EHAM screens. Andreas's A1230 card starts playing up, GURUing after about an hour. Repeated calls to GVP from the frustrated Swede result in the synopsis that the turbo card is faulty and has to be returned. Gloom drifts upon the land...

Friday April 9th

Having experimented, Rico considers that the best way of working is to do the graphics in 32-colour mode, so guaranteeing that the A500 version will look excellent, then retouching and modifying them for the A1200 version, using Opalvision for perfect shading and smoothing.

Saturday April 10th

Rico's A4000 starts to operate at a slower speed and gradually slows down to such an extent that it's impossible to use. A few calls to Commodore Sweden later and he discovers that it's a design fault in a batch of A4000s. The machine has to go back. Rico is Amiga-less. Doom and gloom drifts upon the land...

Sunday April 11th

Rico and Andreas have to use old machines and use the only AA machine out there (an unaccelerated, 2Mb A1200) on a rota basis. This is a far from perfect solution.

(Nothing much really happened for a while because of machine problems. The machine rota thingy kept in operation and Andreas kept on with the map editor, which should be finished in a few weeks.)

Monday April 19th

Decided enough was enough and that it was about time we got the official AA specs from Commodore. The specifications cover all the new modifications to the Amiga chipset and, more importantly, all the new graphic and sprite modes.

Tuesday April 20th

After much searching and probing at Commodore I end up approaching the American head of development and - hurrah! - they're in the post to us. It's a bit of a relief really, as Commodore don't intend to produce any hardware ref-







erence guides to the machine. It's laughable that it's taken so long to get hold of them, though.

Friday April 23rd

Jubilation! The full AA chipset specs arrive via air courier and much celebration ensues... particularly by our programmers. Much giddiness is caused by the fact that scrolling, for example, can be four times as smooth on the A1200 because the scroll pixels are four times smaller on the A1200. The whole weekend is spent drooling over the spec guide and it's saucy implications for the A1200 version of AB2.

Monday April 26th

Rico manages to lose all 32-colour work done to date due to the hard drive going down prior to its repair by Commodore. The 128-colour AA backdrops are intact so he had to retouch them all once more into 32-colour mode. This is a very boring job and Rico has to bore everyone else by endless calls to remind everyone just how boring it really is.

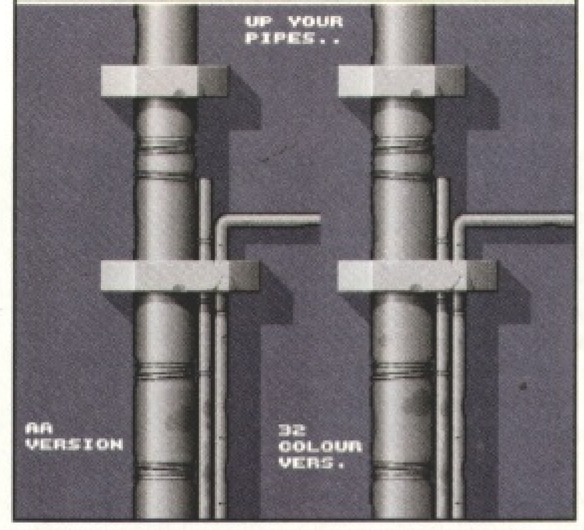
Tuesday April 27th

Andreas still plugs away on the new-fangled map editor beasty, saying it will have all manner of doozy features. For 'saying' read 'claiming'. Rico starts to rework the old graphics into a more modern, better version. It's much better to do it this way so that the graphic blocks fit onto the map clipscreens and therefore can be used much more quickly than before and also the old map editor can be used to produce mock maps for testing. The fact that this mock mapping will not be started for a few more weeks is neither here nor there.

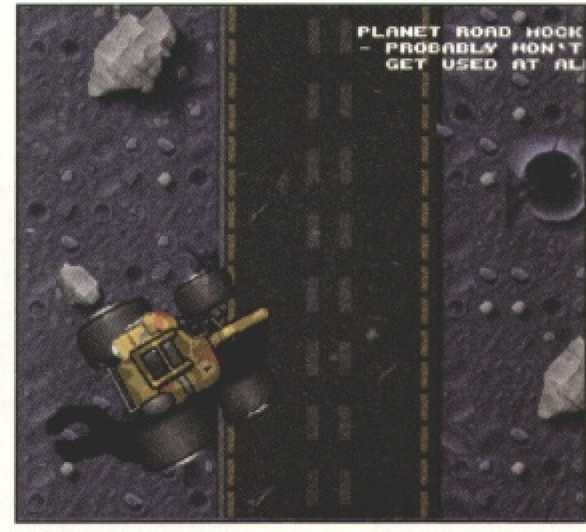
Rico soon discovers that reworking the original graphics is much harder than he first imagined. He thinks it will take a fortnight just getting all the wall pieces together for the interiors of the buildings. Ho-hum...

Wednesday April 28th

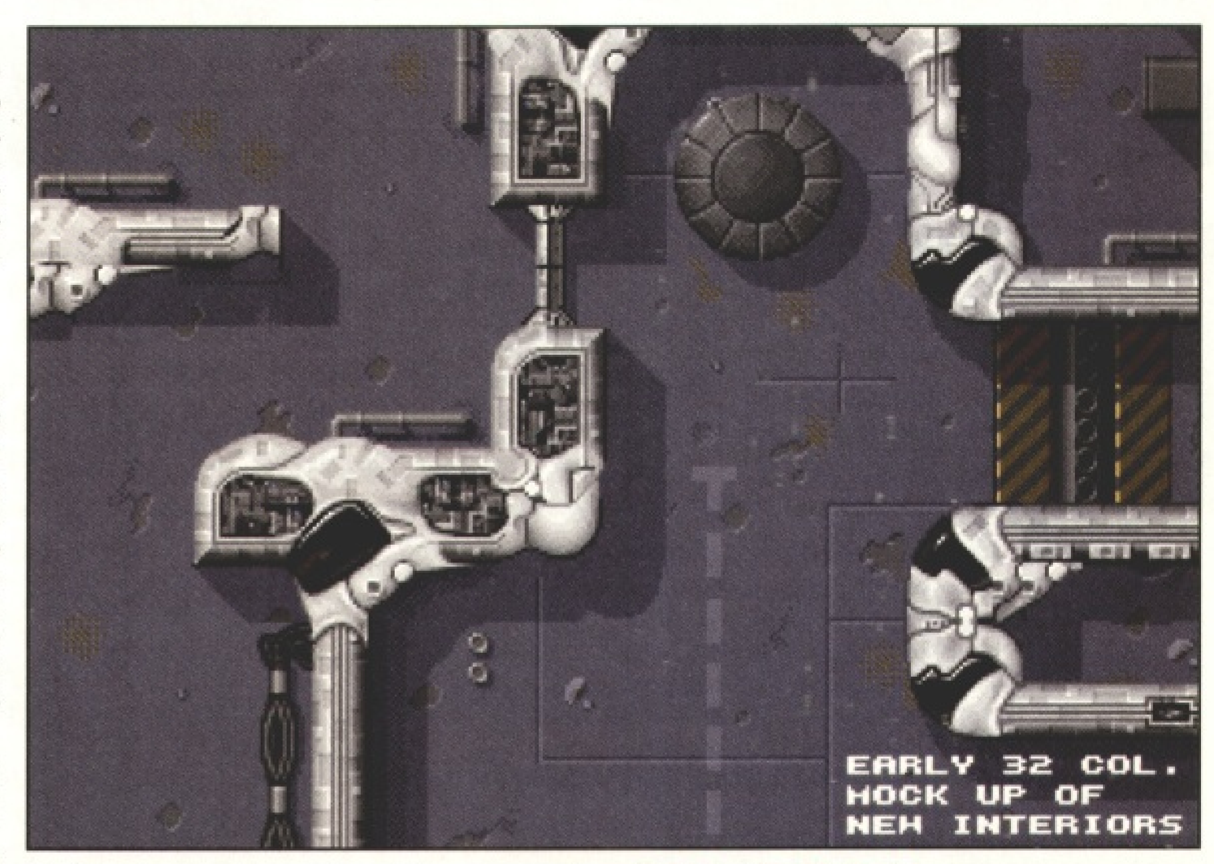
Rico is completely sick of designing interior organic plastic-metal structures already and they're using up far too much graphic space on the clip screen so some sort of compromise will have to be met. You have to realise that you only have so much space reserved for background graphic blocks and with them all being 32 colours it soon gets eaten up. Rico begins to worry about enemies as he is fast running short of colours on the 32-colour version - yet another compromise will have to be made somewhere. The A1200 version, with its 256-colour palette, presents no such problems.

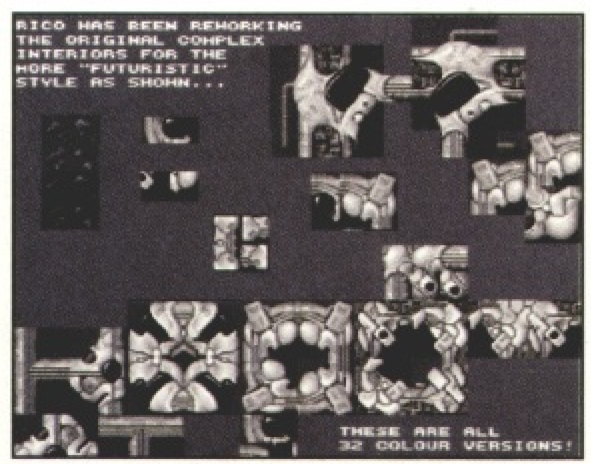


(Above) As you can see, the differences at this stage between the A500/600 and A1200 versions are minimal thanks to careful palette choices.



(Above) This is one of Rico's early mock-ups of the planet's surface, complete with lunar rover type thing. It probably won't get used.





Some more of Rico's background graphics, all done in 32 colours. These have all been based on graphics from the original Alien Breed and enhanced for the sequel.

Thursday April 29th

I design the initial stages of the game based around our three-building structure in the main colony complex. Parts of the building are undergrounds and can only be reached via lifts and passageways. I don't want to reveal too much of the plot at this stage so I'll shut up now.

This scripting aids both Andreas and Rico in the design stages and helps us to know exactly what we are aiming for. Nothing is final though and all is subject to almost inevitable change at a later stage when we think of other ideas or if other ideas are suggested.

Rico's Opalvision replacement arrives and it works fine... Olofstrom's only pub does brief business (at a staggering £4 a pint, it can only be brief) as a result. The next problem arises from the fact that it's very sunny in Sweden and between the hours of 11am and 3pm Rico can't see his monitor because of it. The search for blinds starts... and is successful, so now Rico can work all day long.

The pub does yet more brief business, although Rico declines due to the fact that he has nothing much to celebrate now that he has no 11-3 break anymore.

Friday April 30th

Rico sketches up some ideas for the exterior of the complex. Andreas continues with woefully unexciting map editor and I have a good idea. Yes, it's not that often that it happens but a new recipe for in-game terminals is born. Add spicy graphics, a dose of vector graphics (both line-drawn and filled), juicy sound effects and a sprinkling of vaguely-interesting text and we have a major improvement to the Intex system (now running a revised version of it's original DOS)!

TO DATE: Wednesday May 5th

Myself and Mick prepare to leave for Sweden to spend four days discussing the project. Find out how the trip went and how we fared at the Golden Joystick Awards (we just go the invite today) in the next thrilling Diary instalment. Andreas just phoned and burbled Paradroid noises at me down the phone - the poor soul hasn't quite recovered from meeting his childhood idol (and previous Diary writer) Andrew Braybrook at the ECTS!



RECOMMENDED

Oooh, we're real hard on The One, you know. Why? Well, well not one game from last month's full-o'-goodness issue made it into this month's Recommendeds. Sorry, none of them quite hit that elusive mark that makes a game not so much a luxury, more of a necessity. We have to be that strict because otherwise you might fork out your lolly on a game that's not quite excellent, and then you'd probably hate us for telling you to get it. Of course, the really good thing about this situation is that I've only got towrite this bit and the compo and then I'm finished. Brilliant!

The Addams Family

90%

Publisher	Ocean
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Guide Gomez across tonnes of massive levels in an effort to rescue the rest of his family in one of the finest platform romps to appear on the Amiga so far. Bundles of secret rooms, devious traps and fluid playability make this film tie-in a 'must buy' for all avid fans of the platforming genre.

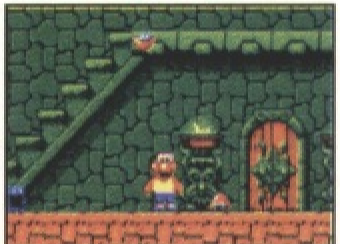


The Aquatic Games

84%

Publisher	Millennium
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Although this type of 'waggle your sticks' sport game went out with Noah, The Aquatic Games injects new life into the old dog by introducing a number of unusual events. Packed full of cartoony visuals and aided by a bouncy soundtrack, the AG's should entertain most owners with a sense of humour.



Arabian Nights

90%

Publisher	Krisalis
Issue Reviewed	April 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

Yes, Arabian Nights is yet another platform game, but don't yawn and turn over the page because this one is really something rather special. It's fast, looks good, sounds terrific and plays superbly, but on top of that it's got some excellent 'arcade adventure' aspects to add a touch of depth. Smart stuff all round.

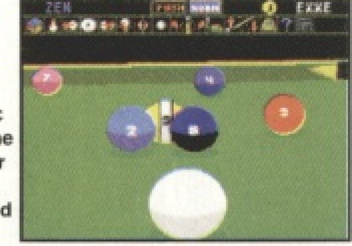


Archer Maclean's Pool

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

When Jimmy White's Snooker was released, the public lapped it up in droves. Archer has used the same game engine to produce a game which is arguably better than Snooker due to the fact that Pool is a more accessible and easier to play sport. If you missed out on JWWS then you'd better pot this 'un.



Assassin

92%

Publisher	Team 17
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99



Assassin is a Strider-based arcade shoot-'em-up which blows the rest of the rest of the feeble attempts clean out of the water. With perfect control, five massive levels, gorgeous graphics, inspiring sonics... Need we go on? Assassin should be in everybody's software collection, now!

Beast 3

90%

Publisher	Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed	September 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99



Whilst the first two Beast games were lovely to look at but crappy to play, Beast 3 show exactly how it should have been done. It's still dreamy to watch but underneath the visuals there's a right stonker of a game. The cleverly designed puzzles and frantic non-stop action should keep most entertained for weeks.

Body Blows

92%

Publisher	Team 17
Issue Reviewed	March 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99



You've read the hype and we've had the phone calls but now, at last, Body Blows is here. And - yes! - it is better than Street Fighter 2. The graphics and sound are as excellent as you've come to expect from Team 17, and the fumpin' gameplay is fast and furious. Every Amiga gamer, beat-'em-up fan or not, will love this.

The Chaos Engine

85%

Publisher	Renegade
Issue Reviewed	February 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99



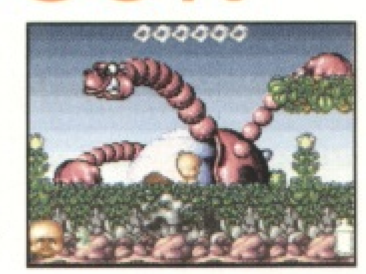
It's been an age in the making but the wait has just about been worth it. TCE is basically Gauntlet with knobs on - but what knobs! Computer-controlled, artificially-intelligent second player, music that changes with the action, RPG-like character development, the list goes on. Great fun, all in all.



Chuck Rock 2

86%

Publisher	Core Design
Issue Reviewed	April 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

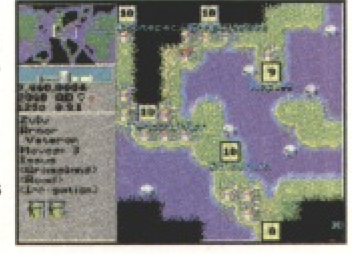


CR2 stars baby Chuck Jnr in a perilous trek across loads of gorgeously-detailed and heavily-parallaxed scrolly levels in an attempt to rescue his dad, the famed Chuck Rock. Although familiar platform stuff, the huge, imaginatively-drawn baddies and tongue-in-cheek humour makes this a winner.

Civilization

81%

Publisher	Microprose
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99



Sid Meier does it again - and you thought he couldn't beat Railroad Tycoon! Your job? Evolve your populace up from the Stone Age to the 20th Century and beyond. The strain of the port from PC to Amiga shows sometimes in the disk accessing, but the involving strategic gameplay more than compensates.

Combat Air Patrol

89%

Publisher	Psygnosis
Issue Reviewed	April 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

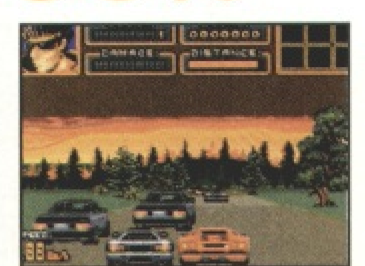


In the same month we review Desert Strike along comes the similarly Gulf War-inspired Combat Air Patrol. It's a flight sim with its eye firmly on playability rather than rigorous technical accuracy, so while it may not impress the sim hard-liners the rest of us will have a whale of a time. The 3D, by the way, is great.

Crazy Cars 3

90%

Publisher	Titus
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

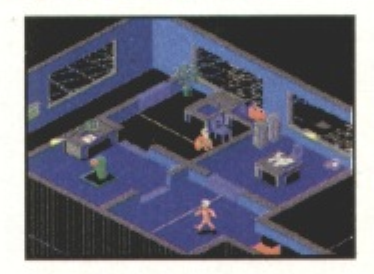


Another series of games where the third proved to be the best of the bunch. Forget the previous two, or most other sprite-based racers - this game is one of the contenders for the racing trophy. It scrolls, plays and moves so well that you'd be a fool to let this one overtake you.

D/Generation

89%

Publisher	Mindscape
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£19.99



A throwback to the old days when isometric games ruled the waves, D/Generation hides its storming gameplay underneath some 'alright' graphics. An arcade adventure in its purest form, immensely suspenseful and cheap as well, you should seriously think again if this isn't in your disk box.

Desert Strike

93%

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed	April 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99



Definitely EA's best Megadrive-to-Amiga conversion yet, DS has you flying a state-of-the-art attack chopper around hostile desert territory. It's a thinking man's shoot-'em-up basically, with excellent graphics and sound and flawless playability. A classic, and actually better than its Megadrive inspiration.

Dune

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99



Based on the 'classic' David Lynch movie, in Dune it's your job to harvest the Spice while battling the evil Harkonnens on the surface of the arid desert world Arrakis. Don't be fooled by the graphic adventure-ish graphics - this is a thinking man's game, albeit one blessed with easy accessibility and superb playability.

Fireforce

90%

Publisher	ICE
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Yet another blast from the past, Fireforce has distinctly Green Beret origins. Who cares where it comes from when the end product is this good? Violence and more violence (with some distinctly realistic throat-slitting) make this horizontally scroller a game which you should hide from your granny.

Flashback

93%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	March 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99



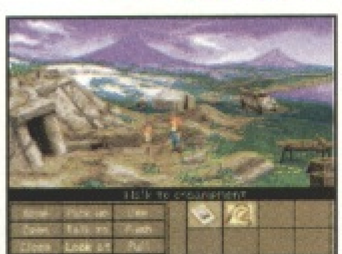
Flashback is from the French geezers wot brought you Another World. If truth be told it's not quite as stunning as that classic but it's a close run thing. The animation of your character as he runs, jumps and fights his way, Prince of Persia like, through the alien world is superb. A platform game fan's dream.

Indy Jones IV (Adventure)

88%



Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	January 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£37.99

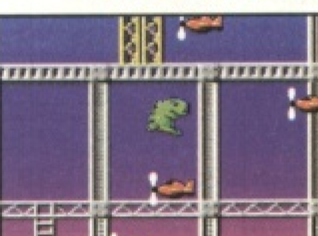


Many consider Indy IV to be the best graphic adventure ever and thanks to its superb graphics and sound, multiple plot paths and marvellous atmosphere they're not far wrong. However, on Amiga the enjoyment is marred slightly by extreme slowness in places and some annoying disk swapping problems.

Hoi

90%

Publisher	Hollyware
Issue Reviewed	August 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99



A super-cute platform jobby that constantly astounds, Hoi is a surprise star on the Amiga. Help the 'saur through five bloody huge levels in one of the most smoothly playable games yet. With real gameplay variation this looks set to become a timeless wonder.

Jaguar XJ220

85%

Publisher	Core Design
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

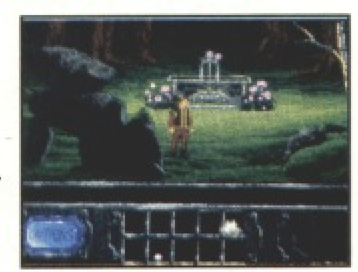
It seems like the World and his wife is doing a licensed car racing game these days, but Core's effort manages to pull away from the pack elegantly thanks to some impressive fast 3D and an excellent easy-to-use track designer (which in our estimation is far better than Lotus 3's RECS anyday).

The Legend of Kyrandia

93%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

A graphic adventure in the Monkey Island 2 model. As Brandon, your only chance of resuscitating your turned-to-stone Grandad is by defeating the mad jester Malcolm (the best villain to have appeared in an Amiga game yet). Lots of truly gorgeous graphics and an inspired player interface.

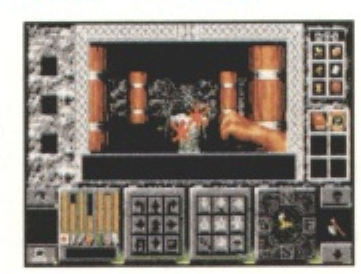


Legends of Valour

92%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

LoV uses an amazing graphics engine to generate the most realistic 3D environment you ever seen! It gives you total freedom of movement in the fantasy gameworld and makes this one of the most atmospheric RPGs yet! Destined to be hailed a classic, you'd be foolish to miss it.



Lemmings 2

91%

Publisher	Pysgnosis
Issue Reviewed	March 1993
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Oh yes! They're back! Topping what must be THE classic game of the last few years was never going to be easy but DMA Design have done a top job. There are fifty new abilities to learn (some Lems can even fly!) and increased player interacton with the scenery. Just as much fun as the original ever was.

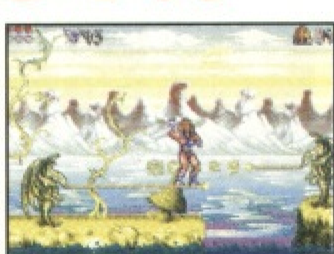


Lionheart

91%

Publisher	Thalion
Issue Reviewed	March 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

German coders are on a bit of a roll at the moment, what with No Second Prize and now this, a hack-n'-slash platform romp. Boasting some of the most stunning scrolling parallax scenery you've ever seen and tight, addicitve gameplay, this is a terrific title that is an essential part of your software collection.

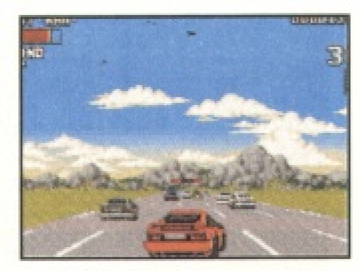


Lotus 3

86%

Publisher	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

The third Lotus instalment mixes the best of the two previous offerings and ends up with a game which will satisfy all. With laps or circuits, a variety of race conditions and an unusual course designer, Gremlin have produced a real winner. You still can't wreck the Lotuses, though!

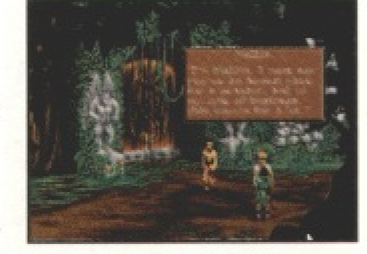


Lure of the Temptress

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

An impressive debut by Revolution, an English based programming team, Lure improves over the standard graphical adventure by way of its real character interaction. The non-playing characters all go about their own business, chatting to to each other and the like, making this the closest game to real life yet.

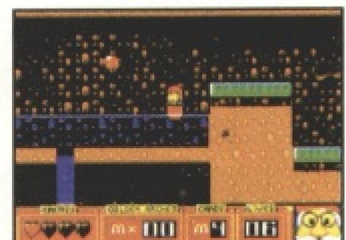


McDonalds Land

90%

Publisher	Virgin Games
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

Yet another attempt to 'do' Mario on the Amiga, this one succeeds thanks to superb playability and some interesting twists on old platforming themes. Of course it's barely got an ounce of originality but who cares when the game's this much fun? Want a great platform game? You got it!



Monkey Island 2

94%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£37.99

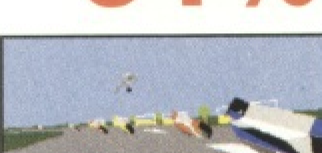
What else is there left to say? The game to end all graphical adventures with genuine humour and gorgeous hand-painted graphics improves in every way over the original (a task in itself). The disk accessing is a trifle too much but the overall package is one of the best you'll ever see on the Amiga.

No Second Prize

91%

Publisher	Thalion
Issue Reviewed	December 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

NSP is arguably the first bike game to actually make you feel like you're astride a throbbing metal monster. Where it scores most over its predecessors is the ease of control the player has over the bike - it's sheer bliss! Virtually faultless, it ranks alongside such other racing classics as Lotus and F1GP.

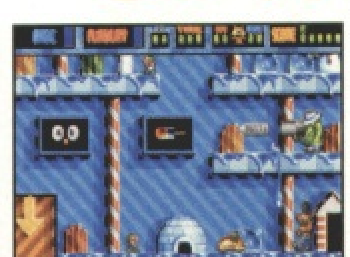


Putty

87%

Publisher	System 3
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

A high-flyer in the charts - and deservedly so. Putty is one of the most original games, let alone platform games, to have appeared in a long time. As a tiny little blue blob, the player has to slip, stretch and absorb his way around umpteen gaudy levels, rescuing robots from an evil wizard's minions. Try it - you'll like it!

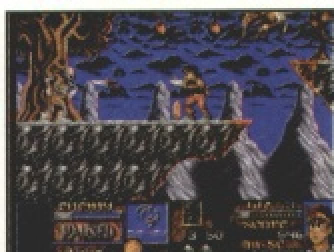


Risky Woods

84%

Publisher	Electronic Arts
Issue Reviewed	July 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Hey, there are these woods, right, and - they're risky! (Thanks in the main to the legions of the Undead that roam its moonlight-dappled pathways). Yup, we're in horizontal-scrolling slash-'em-up territory here and not a bad one at that, although the scrolling is a touch 'jittery' in places.

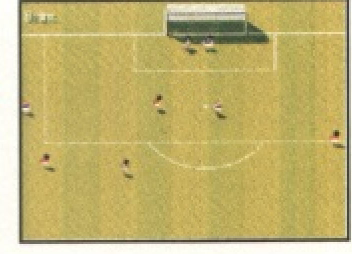


Sensible Soccer V1.1

93%

Publisher	Renegade
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Here at The One we don't care what you OR your mates say - Sensisoccer kicks seven bells out of Kick Off 2. Instinctive control and out-and-out addictiveness make it a joy to play, and the improved goalies in this revised version have produced a game that's near flawless!



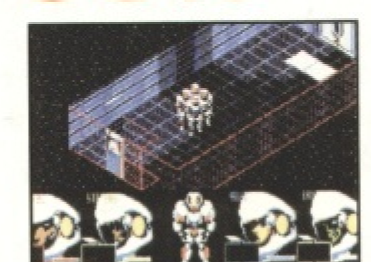


Shadoworlds

88%

Publisher	Krisalis
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

From the same boys who brought you Shadowlands, Shadoworlds re-employs the Photoscape system to good effect in this Aliens-inspired RPG. The accent's more on action here than the puzzle-orientated Shadowlands and arguably suffers for it - shooting monsters in half-darkness can get annoying at times!

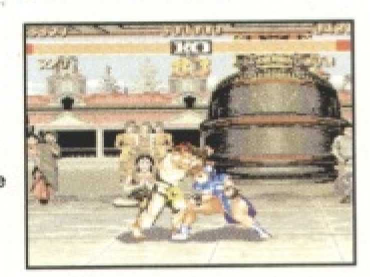


Street Fighter 2

89%

Publisher	US Gold
Issue Reviewed	January 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£27.99

Street Fighter 2 on the Amiga isn't half bad at all. It's not as smart as the SNES version, agreed, and die-hard fans of the coin-op may be disappointed by some of the graphical omissions like the lack of parallaxed backgrounds, but there's still no denying that this is one of the Amiga's better beat-'em-ups of late.

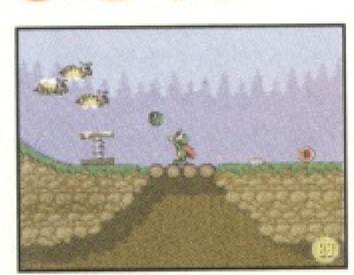


Superfrog

93%

Publisher	Team 17
Issue Reviewed	April 1993
Memory	1Mb
Price	£26.99

Forget Zool - this is the real Amiga 'Sonic-beater'. Like all Team 17's games it looks and sounds marvellous, but the gameplay is what really makes the game shine. From the control through the level design to the difficulty, it's all been brilliantly thought-out. You won't have had so much sheer fun in a long time.

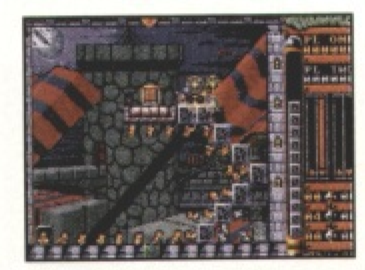


Troddlers

85%

Publisher	Storm
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

A puzzle game which is firmly Lemmings influenced, Troddlers adds to the DMA classic by introducing a number of different level objectives. If anything it owes a little more to Solomen's Key than Lemmings with its emphasis on block manipulation as a means to guiding the Troddlers to the level exit!

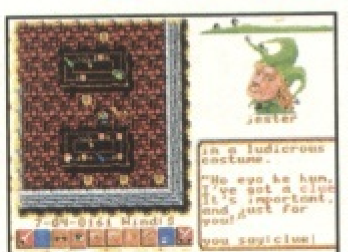


Ultima VI

91%

Publisher	Origin
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£31.99

The latest (and possibly the last, on Amiga at least) in the long line of quality RPGs, Ultima VI is by far the best of the series, boasting attractive if diminutive graphics, incredibly involved plotlines and buckets of atmosphere. Not everybody's cup of tea but an impressive farewell (?) to say the least.



Wing Commander

87%

Publisher	Origin
Issue Reviewed	November 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£29.99

It's the PC-to-Amiga conversion no-one thought we'd ever see, but here it is and it's not half bad. It's got everything the PC version had and is thus just as impressive. Although the 3D can be sluggish at times, the superb feeling of actually taking part in a big space campaign pulls you through the occasional lulls.

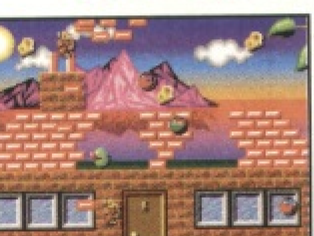


Wizkid

92%

Publisher	Ocean
Issue Reviewed	June 1992
Memory	512K
Price	£25.99

Without a doubt the best game that Ocean has released in a long while, Wizkid also happens to be its most original (all thanks to those crazy funsters at Sensible Software). On the surface it looks like a simple Breakout-inspired arcade game, but there is in fact a wacky arcade adventure lurking beneath. Fun!

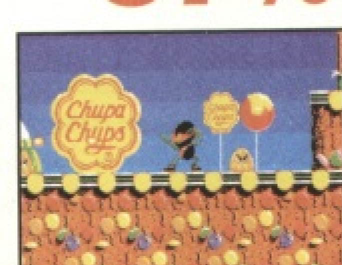


Zool

87%

Publisher	Gremlin
Issue Reviewed	October 1992
Memory	1Mb
Price	£25.99

Gremlin certainly cooked up a character to rival even Mario and Sonic in this 'tribute' to the sad consoles. Fast, furious and manic in every way, Zool is a statement to industry that the Amiga can perform as well as the plastic slabs - and better! There's nothing like Zool to impress your mates.



COMPETITION

A bit of a change to the usual Recommended competition formula this month. Rather than just getting you to reel off the answers to a few easy-peasy questions we're going to make you work for your software prize. What you've got to do is deduce which of the games reviewed this month will be in next month's Recommendeds (i.e. which games got 85% or greater) and then you've got to write a short fifty word summary of each, in the style of the Recommended summaries above. The person we decide is the best will win all of the Recommended games that they wrote about. Not bad, eh? So get scribbling and send your Recommended samples to: Recommended Compo 6, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Be quick - your entry has got to reach us by June 28th or we'll throw it away or something.

NEXT MONTH!

We like the Next Month page as it's the place to sit back and reflect on the issue we've just finished and look forward to pastures new as we contemplate what sheer brilliance will be contained within the next 132 page instalment of The One.

But do you want us to spoil it for you? Of course you do, but we're only going to give you subtle clues as to what July will bring and what better way to do it than a cleverly crafted poem?

ODE TO THE JULY ISSUE OF THE ONE

On June 28th, get down to the shops,
Walk past the freezer selling icey pops,
And head to the shelves where the magazines sit,
Don't pick up the others, for they're not at all good.

No, search out The One - you'll not find it tough,
Look for our logo, not a snap of Brian Clough,
Pick up up the mag and walk straight to the till,
Because if you don't pay, you'll be in trub with The Bill.

Once safely back home, find a comfy settee,
Sit yourself down and explode with glee,
At the numerous demos we'll have just for you,
They'll all be quite good - not any old pooh.

Inside the mag there'll be no sh*te,
Exclusive previews will turn your hair white,
Features galore and up-to-date news,
And, of course, don't forget the reviews.

Competitions to win unbelievable stuff,
PD and Letters, and if that's not enough,
The Alien Breed Diary will continue once more,
The tips will be tops, of that we are sure.

It all sounds amazing, we think you'll agree,
So save up three pounds and 75 pee,
And what you'll find, when all's said and done,
Is the usual excellence you'd expect from The One.

Okay, so you may be feeling none-the-wiser after all that, but we can't give too much away otherwise the entire nation will be so eager to rush out and buy The One next month that there will be no copies left for you, our loyal reader. And you wouldn't want that, would you?

THE ONE

It rhymes with fun. July issue on sale June 28th.


The Most Realistic Football
Management Simulation Ever! ...
Championship
MANAGER™ 93
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